

Data Collection Survey on Human Resource Development and Career Development of Young Nikkei in Japan

Final Report

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1. Survey Overview

1.1 Background and Objectives of the Survey

There are approximately 270,000 Japanese descendants, Nikkei, living in Japan¹, primarily from South America, accounting for 9% of the country's foreign population². Starting in the late 1980s, the number of Japanese descendants from Brazil, Peru, and other countries coming to Japan for “migrant work”, *dekasegi*, increased. This trend accelerated further following the 1990 revision of the Immigration Control Act, which allowed third-generation Japanese descendants to obtain “long-term resident”³ status. Although the number of Nikkei in non-regular employment increased due to the effects of the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008, those who remained in Japan shifted from working as migrant workers to settling down⁴. Against this background, the number of children of Latin American Nikkei living in Japan has risen, and they have faced various challenges in school education, further education, and career choices, such as language learning, academic improvement, and identity formation. At the same time, more young Japanese descendants have overcome these various difficulties and carved out their own lives and lifestyles.

The number of Nikkei and children with foreign connections in Japan is expected to continue increasing⁵ in the future. Improving their educational environment and diversifying their career paths is becoming an even more urgent need. This survey investigates the circumstances surrounding career and employment decisions through interviews with young Japanese descendants active in various fields. It also analyzes the factors that shape their career paths. This survey aims to present a variety of career paths that Japanese descendants and children with foreign connections can pursue to achieve their future dreams and offers recommendations.

1.2 Procedures

After conducting a literature review and hearing surveys to understand the current situation, the procedure was to interview 38 young Japanese descendants from Central and South America, and the results were then organized, analyzed, and used to draw up recommendations. In designing the interview survey, organizing and analyzing the results, and formulating the recommendations, discussion meetings were held with four experts who provided advice. Before formulating the recommendations, a small-scale discussion meeting was held with the interviewees, school officials, supporters and organizations, taking their opinions into account when finalizing the recommendations.

1.3 Target

The survey was conducted with 38 Latin American Nikkei, aged between 20 and 45, who had attended or graduated from at least one of the following types of schools in Japan (elementary school, junior high school, or senior high school), and were still residing in Japan. To align with the purpose of the survey, the subjects were selected from various perspectives to ensure the presentation of examples of career paths and choices that represent a well-balanced range of occupations. The survey subjects were selected without bias in terms of gender (female, male, non-binary), age (20 to 45 years old), roots (various Latin American countries), occupation (working adults: regular employment, professional, non-regular employment, and university students), type of work, primary place of residence where they grew up in Japan, highest level of education completed (junior high school, high school, vocational school, university, or graduate school), and the type

¹ According to the Association of Nikkei & Japanese Abroad, Japanese descendants living overseas are defined as “Japanese people who have moved their base from Japan to another country and are living there with the intention of permanent residence, as well as their descendants, including second, third, and fourth generations, regardless of nationality or mixed heritage.”
<https://jadesas.or.jp/jp/about/about04/>

² There are approximately 200,000 Japanese descendants in Brazil, 48,000 in Peru, 6,000 in Bolivia, 3,000 in Argentina, and 2,000 in Paraguay. <https://discovernikkei.org/ja/journal/2021/11/15/nikkei-latino/>

³ “Long-term resident” is a status of residence granted based on one's descent or background, with no restrictions on employment. Many holders of this status have worked in factories as non-regular employees.

⁴ As their stay in Japan lengthens, more and more Nikkei are switching to “permanent resident” status.

⁵ “Results of the 2023 Survey on the Acceptance of Students Requiring Japanese Language Instruction” (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, August 2024)

⁶ There are 84,930 foreign students enrolled in public elementary schools in Japan, and the total number of foreign students, including those in private and national schools, is 86,017 (as of 2023). (School Basic Survey / 2023 Academic Year Survey of Elementary and Secondary Education Institutions, Special Training Schools, Miscellaneous Schools, High School Correspondence Education Survey, and Elementary School Survey)

of school attended (Japanese public school or foreign school).

1.4 Period

February to December 2024

1.5 Methodology and Items

This survey was conducted through interviews. The interviewees were selected using the snowball sampling method (also known as opportunistic sampling) based on the selection criteria mentioned above. This method involves expanding the pool of survey subjects through person-to-person referrals. Referrals were received from the Association of Nikkei & Japanese Abroad, JICA Yokohama, local international exchange associations, NPOs, and other support groups, as well as from the education boards and school teachers previously interviewed. Additionally, the presence of key individuals who have provided continuous support and advice in areas such as school life, study, career choice, and career development was also revealed. In this survey, five key individuals were interviewed to gain insights into the issues faced by Latin American Nikkei children, as well as the methods of support available to them.

The main interview items were (1) the timing and circumstances of arrival in Japan, (2) the environment in which they primarily grew up after coming to Japan, (3) the family environment (relationship with guardians), (4) language learning status, (5) school life, (6) relationships in Japan and their home country, (7) further education and career development, (8) connections with their home country, (9) identity, (10) things they worked hard at, things that made them happy, things they liked, (11) things that were difficult or troubling, and (12) the existence of supporters.

1.6 Structure

This survey was conducted by the International Development Center of Japan, Inc.

1.7 Constraints

As mentioned above, the survey subjects were selected from the network of the support group, etc., so this survey population does not necessarily represent the characteristics of Latin American Nikkei living in Japan. Additionally, since the survey method was qualitative and interview-based, it is difficult to statistically process and generalize the results, and it is only possible to identify trends and characteristics. Furthermore, the age range of the subjects was wide, spanning from their 20s to 40s. Even the youngest, in their 20s, had attended elementary school more than 10 years ago. Therefore, it is important to note that the educational environment at the time differs from the current situation, as measures and support for children with foreign connections have changed significantly. With these limitations in mind, the survey results were organized and analyzed on the premise that the interviewees represented a limited group.

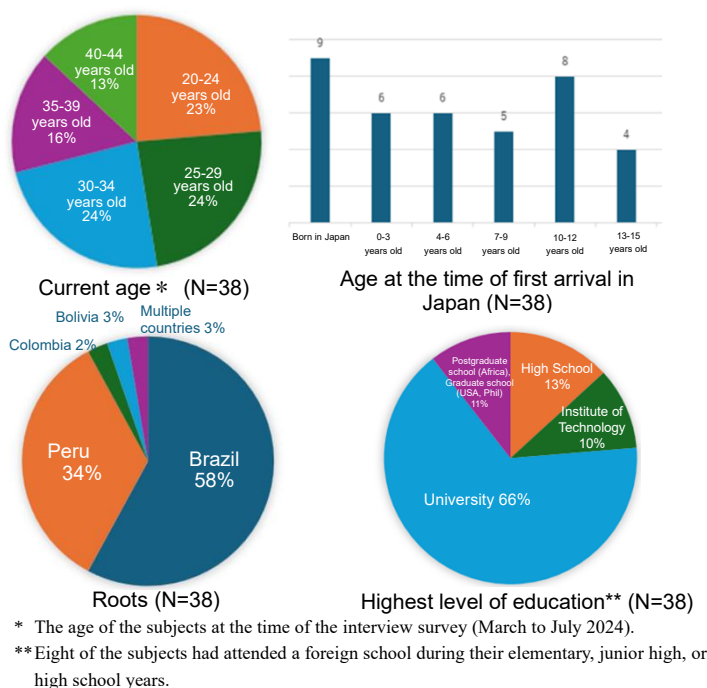
2. Organization of Interview Results

2.1 Overview and Characteristics of Interviewees

Thirty-eight interviewees were selected according to the selection criteria. In accordance with the purpose of the survey, the target group consisted of young Latin American Nikkei who were either students or working adults at the time of the survey. As mentioned in the constraints of the survey, the attributes are not intended to generalize Japanese descendants, but rather to summarize the interviewees who agreed to participate.

Both the current age and the age at first arrival in Japan vary widely. The main roots of the participants were Brazil and Peru. Of the 38 participants, the majority had completed university education.

Occupations include manufacturing (sales, inspection, engineering, factory work), gas companies (clerical work), apparel sales (manager), insurance (sales), service industry (call center sales, advertising/marketing, tourism, video production, designer, temporary staffing), education (teachers, learning support staff, Japanese language instructors), medical and welfare (social welfare councils, medical interpreters, care workers, medical company sales), entrepreneurs (visa agencies, restaurants, fitness gyms), public service (embassies), social contribution (NPOs), and university and postgraduate students.



2.2 Organization of Interview Results

The ages of the interviewees at the time of their first arrival in Japan varied. Another characteristic of Latin American Nikkei is that some moved back to their home countries after coming to Japan, only to return to Japan again later. In the following table, the 38 interviewees are divided into four groups based on their "time of arrival in Japan and experiences moving between Japan and their home countries." The data have been organized to show "how the timing of arrival in Japan and experiences of moving between Japan and their home country affected the education they received, their approach to learning, academic ability, language skills, career paths, and career development."

The impact (including barriers, etc.) of the “timing of arrival in Japan and experiences of traveling between Japan and their home country” on the educational environment, learning attitudes, academic ability, language skills, career paths, and career development of the 38 interviewees.

	(1) Those who were born in Japan or came to Japan before starting school and have only experienced Japanese school education.	(2) Those who came to Japan after elementary school and have only experienced Japanese school education.	(3) Those who have experienced coming and going between both Japanese and foreign schools, since birth or since arriving in Japan.	(4) Those who have experienced moving to their home country after birth or after arriving in Japan, and then returning to Japan. (Those who have experienced Japanese education at both foreign schools and/or Japanese schools in Japan.)
Before Arriving in Japan:	- No problems with everyday Japanese conversation. - Only use the native language at home.	- Arrived in Japan with no ability to speak Japanese. - No problems with everyday conversation in their native language.	- No ability to speak Japanese at all, with only a few words known. - Use the native language at home.	- Each person's experience before arriving in Japan, as well as their guardians' approach, will differ.
Elementary school Junior high school Time period	○ Educational Environment, Learning Attitude, and Academic Ability - It is difficult to be chosen for pull-out classes. - Not many difficulties making friends. - Students sometimes don't understand why they can't grasp the lessons and think it's their fault, but it's difficult for both the teacher and the student to notice. - In many cases, reading, writing, and the academic language lag behind. - Some attend Japanese and native language support classes run by NPOs. ○ Language - In many cases, there are no problems with Japanese conversation. - As their native language is only used at home, many are at the level of "being able to understand most of what is said and speak a little." - Some begin to feel that they are good at English. - Some attend Japanese and native language support classes run by NPOs. ○ Relationship with Guardians - Many use Japanese at school and their native language at home, which may hinder communication about their studies, friendships, or adolescent concerns. - They often act as interpreters for their guardians (at school, for public procedures, etc.)	○ Educational Environment, Learning Attitude, and Academic Ability - If pull-out classes are available, they are included. - They may be excluded, teased, or bullied because of language or cultural differences, which could lead to truancy. - Spending time learning about Japanese culture and customs. - Students sometimes don't understand why they can't grasp the lessons and think it's their fault. - Difficulties with subjects such as Japanese, social studies, and those requiring conceptual understanding. - Many begin to feel that they are good at English. - If they come to Japan at an older age, the gap in their academic learning during the 1-2 years of pull-out classes may have a lasting impact thereafter. - In some cases, reading, writing, and the academic language lag behind. - Some attend Japanese and native language support classes run by NPOs. ○ Language - In many cases, students can learn to speak Japanese for everyday situations after taking pull-out Japanese language classes for 6 months to a year. - It is difficult to maintain one's native language if it is only used at home. If they come to Japan at a later age, they will already have a basic knowledge of the language, so it is easier to maintain it. - Some attend NPO Japanese and native language support classes. ○ Relationship with Guardians - Many use Japanese at school and their native language at home, which may hinder communication about their studies, friendships, or adolescent concerns. - They often act as interpreters for their guardians (at school, for public procedures, etc.)	○ Educational Environment, Learning Attitude, and Academic Ability - At foreign schools, some students spent time with their Latin American Nikkei friends and teachers, which made them feel less like they were in Japan. - Foreign schools are small, with a limited number of students. - There are cases where students transfer from a foreign school to a public elementary school midway through their studies. - There are few opportunities for career education at foreign schools. - While foreign schools actively hold events and introduce culture from their home countries, they do not have extracurricular activities or sports days like Japanese schools. - Some foreign schools also offer opportunities to experience Japanese culture. ○ Language - Japanese classes at foreign schools are infrequent, and the level is low. - At foreign schools, all subjects are taught in the students' native language. - The language used at foreign schools tends to be the students' native language. ○ Relationship with Guardians - They often act as interpreters for their guardians (at school, for public procedures, etc.) - The ethnic community's connections are stronger than those in (1), (2), and (4).	[If they move back to their home country while attending elementary or junior high school in Japan] ○ Educational Environment, Learning Attitude, and Academic Ability - In some cases, students may be placed in a lower grade and transferred to a school in their home country. ○ Language - In some cases, students may forget Japanese if they return to their home country during their childhood. [If they return to Japan while attending elementary or junior high school in their home country] ○ Educational Environment, Learning Attitude, and Academic Ability - If they move from Japan to their home country while in elementary school, they will be more familiar with their home country's language, schools, and friendships. However, if they return to Japan, they will experience the loss of friends and the shock of a change in lifestyle. - After returning to Japan, they will find it even harder to get used to school, studying, and life in Japan. - Some attend Japanese and native language support classes run by NPOs. ○ Language - They find it even more difficult to learn Japanese after returning to Japan, and end up taking pull-out classes to learn how to read and write Japanese (the same as (2)). - Some attend Japanese and native language support classes run by NPOs. ○ Relationship with Guardians - Since the language used at school and at home differs, there are cases where they cannot talk to their guardians about their studies, friendships, or adolescent concerns due to the language barrier. - They often act as interpreters for their guardians (at school, for public procedures, etc.)
High school entrance	○ Paths - Many people consider entering a high school in Japan, as they realize early on that they will be staying in Japan for a long time. - Some people go on to study in international or English-language departments. ○ Barriers - Guardians may lack sufficient information about further education. - Financial circumstances can limit the options available. - Admission quotas for foreigners are not available. - A lack of academic ability or Japanese language skills	○ Paths - Many students consider attending high school in Japan. - Some may not wish to attend high school due to a lack of information. - Many choose to enroll in international or English-language departments. ○ Barriers: - Guardians may lack sufficient information about further education. - Financial circumstances can limit the options available. - Depending on the age at which they arrive in Japan, they may be eligible for the foreign student entrance exam	○ Paths - They consider entering a Japanese high school. - Some aim to enter high school in their home country in order to go to university there. - Faced with difficulties regarding academic ability and information when transferring to a Japanese high school, some students choose to stay in foreign schools. ○ Barriers: - There are some municipalities where it is not possible to transfer from foreign school to a Japanese high school. - Students may lack the academic ability or Japanese language proficiency required for high school entrance	○ Paths - In many cases, students wish to continue their education in the country where they were until junior high school. - On the other hand, there are cases where students are used to moving between countries and feel little resistance to attending high school in a country different from the one where they attended elementary and junior high school (e.g., for reasons such as soccer). ○ Barriers: - Even if they are considering going on to high school in Japan, there are cases where they must choose to go on to high school in their home country due to their guardians'

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	required for the Japanese high school entrance exam can limit the available options.	quota. - If they lack the academic ability or Japanese language proficiency needed for the Japanese high school entrance exam, their options are limited, and they may opt for a part-time schooling system or correspondence courses.	exams. - They may give up on entering a Japanese high school and instead prepare for their future path, such as university or college of technology, while attending a foreign school.	circumstances. - Even if they are considering going on to high school in their home country, there are cases where they must choose between going on to high school in Japan or finding a job due to their guardians' policy.
High school years	○ Educational Environment, Learning Attitude, and Academic Ability - They advance to a high school that matches their academic ability, and their attitude toward learning and academic ability improve as they enjoy their studies. - Some attend Japanese and native language support classes run by NPOs. - They learn about the Japanese way of thinking and cultural practices from friends, club activities, part-time jobs, etc., which they cannot learn from their guardians. ○ Language - They no longer have problems with everyday conversation. - Some feel they have no problems with the language they are studying, while others feel they do. - The native language is spoken only at home, and listening and speaking are possible to a certain extent. However, vocabulary is limited.	○ Educational Environment, Learning Attitude, and Academic Ability - They advance to a high school that matches their academic ability, and their attitude toward learning and academic ability improve as they enjoy their studies. - Many feel that they are good at English. - Some struggle with the gaps in their learning from elementary and junior high school. - Some attend Japanese and native language support classes run by NPOs. - They learn about the Japanese way of thinking and cultural practices from friends, club activities, part-time jobs, etc., which they cannot learn from their guardians. ○ Language - They have no trouble with everyday conversation or the Japanese used in school life. - Some feel they have no problems with the language they are studying, while others feel they do. - Maintaining their native language can be difficult if they only use it at home, but many people find that their native language becomes an advantage if they moved to Japan at a young age.	[If they spend their high school years at a foreign school] - The same as in elementary and junior high school. [If they enter a foreign school for the first time in high school] ○ Educational Environment, Learning Attitude, and Academic Ability - Some may struggle to adapt to the school, which differs from the one in their home country. - Some are shocked by the differences from their home country's school (e.g., smaller size, lower level of instruction in their native language), leading to a loss of motivation. - Some worry about their future due to the differences from their home country's school. ○ Language - Some try to learn Japanese through NPO language classes or part-time work. - No problems with their native language.	○ Educational Environment, Learning Attitude, and Academic Ability - Some experience mental distress and a sense of crisis about their future due to major changes in their environment and education, such as returning to Japan or immigrating. This leads them to make an effort to acquire the language and academic skills they previously lacked. - Some students who struggled to adjust to Japanese schools during elementary and junior high school, and even stopped attending, later move on to a high school that matches their academic ability, and their attitude toward learning and academic ability improve as they enjoy their studies. ○ Language - Some experience mental distress and a sense of crisis about their future due to major changes in their environment and education, such as returning to Japan or immigrating. This leads them to make an effort to acquire the language and academic skills they previously lacked.
Career paths after graduating from high school	- Many people consider going to university in Japan. - Some people aim to find employment after graduating from high school.	- Many people consider going to university in Japan. - Some people aim to find employment after graduating from high school.	- Japanese college of technology. - Some people spend one year studying as private students while working part-time to enter university in Japan. - Some people choose to attend university in their home country or study abroad in a third country.	- Those who have experience of high school in Japan often want to find employment or go on to university in Japan. - Those who have experience of high school in their home country often want to go on to a college of technology or university in their home country. Or, while hoping to go to university in Japan, they plan to go to university in their home country first.
Barriers to university entrance and how to overcome them	Barriers to university entrance: - It is difficult to access information about university entrance. - It may not be possible to pay the tuition fees due to financial circumstances. - Public universities have many entrance exam subjects. - Private universities, which have fewer subjects to study for, have higher tuition fees. - In some cases, guardians do not support their children's university entrance exams. How to overcome: - Obtain information about university entrance from schools and NPOs. - Make use of scholarships and educational loans (information from NPOs, etc.) - Choose a nearby public school. - Choose a private school through a designated school recommendation or AO entrance exam. - Choose a university overseas.	Barriers to university entrance: - It is difficult to access information about university entrance. - It may not be possible to pay the tuition fees due to financial circumstances. - Public universities have many entrance exam subjects. - Private universities, which have fewer subjects to study for, have higher tuition fees. - In some cases, guardians do not support their children's university entrance exams. How to overcome: - Obtain information about university entrance from schools and NPOs. - Make use of scholarships and educational loans (information from NPOs, etc.) - Choose a nearby public school. - Choose a private school through a designated school recommendation or AO entrance exam. - Choose a university overseas. - Take a break from school to save money for tuition.	Barriers to university entrance: ★If they transfer to a Japanese public elementary or junior high school, the process is the same as (2). ★In other cases: - If they have not studied enough of the Japanese or their home country's curriculum, or if their Japanese language ability or academic ability is insufficient, it will be difficult to take the entrance exam for the university they want to attend. - Universities that offer entrance exams based on recommendations/AO exams, etc., as it is difficult to take the general entrance exams in Japan. - It is difficult to obtain information about pursuing further education. - Due to financial circumstances limiting options for continuing education, one is studying independently. How to overcome: ★If they transfer to a Japanese public elementary or junior high school, the process is the same as (2). ★In other cases: - Prepare for the Japanese Language Proficiency Test by	Barriers to university entrance and how to overcome them: ★If they transfer to a Japanese public elementary or junior high school, the process is the same as (2). ★In other cases: [If they return to Japan while attending elementary or junior high school in their home country] - Passed the entrance exam for a private university through a designated school recommendation. - Gave up on applying to a public university due to the entrance exam subject (Japanese language) being a barrier. Attended a private university on a scholarship but transferred to a public university due to financial reasons. [If they returned to Japan during high school and completed their high school education at a foreign school] - Since it is difficult to get into a Japanese university or vocational school, I aim to attend a college of technology in the fashion industry, which does not require an entrance exam. After graduating from high school, prepare academically and financially by working part-time and studying for the Japanese Language Proficiency Test for one

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		- Work in a factory while attending a correspondence university. - Choose a university overseas.	- working part-time. - Apply to a private school with fewer subjects for the entrance exam, or a public school with an AO entrance exam. - Go to a third country where the subjects and level of the entrance exam are easier, then study abroad there before going on to a Japanese university using a special preparatory program for international students. - Attend a private high school in their home country with the goal of progressing to university there.	- year. [If they moved to their home country and completed high school there] - Although they would actually like to go to a university in Japan, where they were born, they go to a university in their home country due to their educational history.
University and college of technology years	- They expand their world, gain confidence, and realize what they want to do (e.g., promoting multicultural coexistence and utilizing both languages and English). - Some work part-time or take a break from school to earn money for tuition, or make use of scholarships. - There are also those who transition from being the recipients of support to becoming the ones providing support at the NPO that helped them in the past.	- They expand their world, gain confidence, and realize what they want to do (e.g., promoting multicultural coexistence and utilizing both languages and English). - Some work part-time or take a break from school to earn money for tuition, or make use of scholarships. - There are also those who transition from being the recipients of support to becoming the ones providing support at the NPO that helped them in the past.	- When studying foreign languages, multicultural coexistence, cross-cultural understanding, etc., there are often many people around with foreign connections, making it easy to get support from professors as well. - If this is the first time leaving the Latin American community since entering university, the university can be used as a place to learn Japanese and build networks for the future.	[If they return to Japan while attending elementary or junior high school in their home country] - At university, it is possible to become more confident than in high school. - There are also those who transition from being the recipients of support to becoming the ones providing support at the NPO that helped them in the past. [If they returned to Japan during high school and completed their high school education at a foreign school] - Obtain qualifications at a college of technology in Japan, and while working part-time, acquire Japanese language skills and learn the rules for working in Japan. [If they moved to their home country and completed high school there] - Study abroad in Japan, a country they had long hoped to study in, through a university in their home country.
Career development	- While many university graduates are hired as new graduates, for high school graduates and others, careers may start with part-time work or fixed-term employment (such as temporary positions, factory work, or truck driving).	- While many university graduates are hired as new graduates, for high school graduates and others, careers may start with part-time work or fixed-term employment (such as temporary positions, factory work, or truck driving). - Some aim to go to university after finding a job. - Some people experience difficulties when changing jobs. - In some cases, individuals move from being an intern to becoming a full-time employee and eventually starting their own business.	- Some learn Japanese and Japanese culture through part-time work. - In some cases, they build their careers by leveraging Japanese, English, and their native language. - Some aim to move into design-related fields to complement their language skills. [If they aim to gain employment in Japan] ☆If they transfer to a Japanese public elementary or junior high school, the process is the same as (2). ☆In other cases: - While there are cases where challenges become greater in finding employment, there are also cases where people acquire specialized skills and go on to become full-time employees or start their own businesses in the design field. [If they aim to gain employment in their home country] - Japanese language teachers, interpreters, etc. [If they aim to gain employment at an international organization] - There are cases where people give up because they are not Japanese citizens and therefore ineligible to apply. - Some people experience difficulties when changing jobs. - In some cases, individuals move from being an intern to becoming a full-time employee and eventually starting their own business.	[If they return to Japan while attending elementary or junior high school in their home country] - Secure a job in Japan to save money and continue research in graduate school. - Work part-time in Japan, then as a factory dispatch worker, become a full-time employee, get promoted to foreman, and eventually transition to a career in sales. - Move to Brazil to find work, work part-time, secure a job, and then return to Japan to teach Japanese while continuing on to graduate school. [If they returned to Japan during high school and completed their high school education at a foreign school] - After graduating from a college of technology, join a clothing manufacturer as a full-time employee. [If they moved to their home country and completed high school there] - After graduating from university in their home country, they study abroad at a Japanese graduate school. [If they moved to their home country during high school] - After studying Japanese and their native language, and gaining experience as a translator, interpreter, and in sales in their home country, they came to Japan to work in the foreign-background staffing industry. [If they move to their home country and complete a college of technology course there] - After returning to Japan, they worked as a factory dispatch

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				worker, then found employment at a company, and started their own business.
Future goals	- Many people are involved in work related to multiculturalism and supporting people of South American roots, or in roles that build bridges between South America and Japan. - Alternatively, if the opportunity arises, they share the desire to be involved. In some cases, the customers are of South American descent. - They often struggle with Japan's unique "job-hunting process," and even if they have a clear career goal and strong skills, they sometimes face difficulties.	- Many people are involved in work related to multiculturalism and supporting people of South American roots, or in roles that build bridges between South America and Japan. - Alternatively, if the opportunity arises, they share the desire to be involved. In some cases, the customers are of South American descent. - They often struggle with Japan's unique "job-hunting process," and even if they have a clear career goal and strong skills, they sometimes face difficulties.	- Many people are involved in work related to multiculturalism and supporting people of South American roots, or in roles that build bridges between South America and Japan. - Alternatively, if the opportunity arises, they share the desire to be involved. In some cases, the customers are of South American descent. - Some want to inspire children like them by creating picture books, music, and animation that complement language expression. - There are more people who don't limit their workplace to Japan than those in (1) and (2) above.	- Many people are involved in work related to multiculturalism and supporting people of South American roots, or in roles that build bridges between South America and Japan. - Alternatively, if the opportunity arises, they share the desire to be involved. In some cases, the customers are of South American descent. - There are more people who don't limit their workplace to Japan than those in (1) and (2) above.

3. Analysis of Interview Survey Results

In situations such as “school life,” “local communities and NPOs,” “home,” “language learning,” and “career development,” different actors provide support to Latin American Japanese-descendant children, including the interviewees. Chapter 3 organizes and analyzes, based on the results of the interview survey and interviews with relevant parties, the support provided to the interviewees and how they overcame the challenges and barriers they faced. This analysis is divided into (1) school education, (2) community and family, (3) language learning (Japanese, native language, etc.), and (4) career development.

3.1 School Life

3.1.1 At the time of entering or transferring to a school upon arrival in Japan

(1) What the interviewees experienced when they came to Japan

The interviewees faced significant changes in various aspects of their lives, including language, cultural customs, school life, and learning when they arrived in Japan. Latin American Nikkei children may experience significant changes multiple times due to moving within Japan or between Japan and their home country because of their parents' work-related circumstances. Although many Japanese descendants currently attending school in Japan were born and raised there, they often face challenges similar to those encountered by other children of foreign connections (e.g., issues related to language, learning, and family environment). Furthermore, some individuals transfer from foreign schools to public schools and face difficulties in school life and learning due to various environmental differences. One interviewee shared a story: “If there are Japanese people in the family, you can understand Japanese customs to some extent. However, if the guardians are Brazilian, there is no entrance ceremony in Brazil, neither the children nor their guardians knew they were supposed to wear formal clothes so they showed up in their everyday clothes, which was embarrassing.”

(2) Teachers' understanding and support for children

Despite the diverse situations and circumstances of the interviewees when they arrived in Japan, schools and teachers often tended to view them as a single group with “foreign or Latin American roots.” One interviewee shared: “I think the teacher at the time commented that I couldn’t speak Japanese when I introduced myself on my first day of school. I felt that a hierarchical relationship was created between me and the other children, where I was expected to ‘do things for them,’ and they were expected to ‘do things for me.’ I felt like I should do something in return, but I couldn’t do anything for my friends, and I felt like a bad person.” The presence or absence of understanding from teachers and peers can significantly affect how children adjust to Japanese schools and life, particularly when arriving first or when transferring to a public school. This understanding also impacts their learning attitude, motivation, and sense of self-esteem. Interviews revealed that when children felt understood and were able to communicate with those around them, it helped alleviate feelings of discomfort, loneliness, teasing or bullying, and exclusion.

(3) An opportunity for school staff to gain a deeper understanding of children

The Hamamatsu City Board of Education holds explanatory meetings for teachers at each school to deepen their understanding of children with foreign connections. Additionally, they provide opportunities to explain the city's foreign resident support programs to school principals and newly appointed teachers during training sessions. In other training sessions, they also provide advice on how to approach and support children with foreign connections in the classroom. In Mie Prefecture, the message “The education of foreign children is guaranteed as a human right” has been issued, and this message is shared within the education field. As a result, both teachers and ordinary citizens have developed an understanding that “the issues surrounding children with foreign connections are their own problems.” Consequently, in areas referred to as concentrated Latin American Nikkei communities, teachers, school staff, local NPOs, and other support workers are making efforts to deepen their understanding of children with foreign connections and to provide tailored support through training opportunities and messages from local governments.

3.1.2 Support system at school (initial adaptation guidance, pull-out classes, etc.)

Children who have just arrived in Japan or who are transferring from a foreign school to a Japanese school receive support in the form of initial adaptation guidance and pull-out classes when entering, transferring to,

or changing schools at the elementary, junior high, or high school levels.

(1) Initial adaptation guidance

In Hamamatsu City, Shizuoka Prefecture, when entering, transferring to, or changing schools at the elementary school level, Japanese language instructors are sent to the school. The homeroom teacher assesses the child's Japanese language acquisition level to determine whether support is needed. If it is determined that support is necessary at the elementary school level, initial adaptation guidance is provided at the time of enrollment, followed by basic Japanese language instruction. After that, Japanese language instructors and foreign student subject instructors use pull-out classes to provide both Japanese language instruction and subject instruction. For children who start attending Japanese schools from junior high school, Japanese language instruction is provided through pull-out classes, guidance for adapting to school life is given, and basic supplementary lessons for subjects are provided. In this way, a system is created that allows for smooth adaptation to regular classes after acquiring basic academic skills. In places such as Hamamatsu City in Shizuoka Prefecture, Toyota City in Aichi Prefecture, and Kani City in Gifu Prefecture, many schools delegate the initial adaptation guidance and Japanese language classes to NPOs. The interviewees shared their experiences, such as: "In the initial adaptation class, we learned hiragana and katakana, as well as simple addition and subtraction. To get used to Japanese school life, we walked to a nearby elementary school for lunch program and spent our lunch break in the playground. It was surprising that we had to clean up ourselves in Japan."

(2) Pull-out classes and international classrooms

In the pull-out classes and international classrooms, not only were they able to receive support with their studies and language, but they were also able to talk with other children participating in the pull-out classes about the differences between their home countries and Japan, the differences between their own families and Japanese families, and their worries about their roles in the family. They also shared the experience of being able to speak their native language in a relaxed way. This is because students feel secure when they are recognized as someone who "belongs here" and when they feel that "their native language and culture are affirmed," which allows them to feel that "this is a meaningful place for me." At the same time, it is important to be aware that some children may feel embarrassed about participating in pull-out classes, or that it may affect their learning in other subjects. In the interviews, some of the students shared experiences such as, "When I went to the pull-out class, the teacher said in front of everyone, 'Let's go to the Japanese class,' and I felt embarrassed when I was the only one waved at by everyone else and sent off to a different classroom," and "Even though I was relatively good at math, when I was in fourth grade, my math classes were assigned to the pull-out class to study Japanese, so I had less time to study math, and gradually, I started to struggle."

(3) Delays in study and language learning

Many of the interviewees mentioned that "after six months to one or two years of Japanese language classes following their arrival in Japan, they no longer had problems with everyday conversation." However, many also shared that, "Even though I could hold everyday conversations, it was still difficult to keep up with the regular classes." In particular, there were many difficulties in subjects that required reading and writing, such as Japanese language, social studies, and subjects that required conceptual understanding. One interviewee shared, "I didn't understand what was being said in Japanese, so I got used to just sitting there and became very passive about my studies. I also thought, 'It is on me,' because my test scores were so bad." We also heard about the impact of the gap in subject learning that resulted from not participating in subject classes during the pull-out sessions, which continued to affect the students later on.

The efforts of teachers in regular classes are helpful to students. One of the interviewees said, "When the homeroom teacher at junior high school read the 'class newsletter' to the entire class every time it was distributed, I learned the readings of kanji by ear, understood their meanings, and improved my reading and writing skills." The teachers' ongoing individual support and encouragement, while considering the students' situations and strengths and weaknesses, also contributed to improvements in academic ability and career development.

(4) Children born in Japan and who have Japanese nationality, but are likely to fall through the cracks in terms of school support

Students born in Japan or with Japanese nationality are sometimes assumed to be able to participate in lessons

just like other Japanese children, which can lead to them being overlooked for support. As a result, they miss out on learning support, and in some cases, they are unable to get opportunities to overcome their weaknesses or resolve their questions, leading them to believe they are “bad at studying.” In the interview, the following story was shared: “The international class at junior high school was intended for children who couldn't speak Japanese, so I wasn't able to join. I wanted to learn in an environment where I could ask questions and get help with my review when I didn't understand something in class, but the decision was made that ‘since you can speak Japanese and the international class has a lot of students, let's focus on regular classes instead.’” In Gifu Prefecture, it is also reported that during a dialogue between the teachers in charge of the international classrooms and an NPO, the following comment was made: “There is a situation where children born and raised in Japan, who are with foreign connections, do not have the academic ability or grades to match, and their grades are not improving, but this is not due to laziness on their part. Shouldn't we do something to support them?”

(5) The status of resources and network development on the school side

It is also true that the success of pull-out classes depends on the enthusiasm, motivation, and expertise of the teachers involved. A teacher in charge of the international classroom at an elementary school in Fujisawa City, Kanagawa Prefecture, said, “There are very few teaching materials available in multiple languages, so we have to create a significant amount of our own materials tailored to each student.” Since it is not possible to create teaching materials during international classroom time, this is being accomplished by utilizing time outside of class, driven by the individual's motivation and abilities, and through teamwork with the school and the homeroom teacher. It is challenging for each teacher to make such efforts. In a situation where support resources are limited compared to the ever-increasing number of children with foreign connections, the importance of securing support personnel and teaching materials, as well as developing networks within and between schools, was confirmed through interviews with teachers in charge of international classrooms. For example, Fujisawa City holds an international classroom liaison meeting once a month, where teaching materials created by each school are shared with teachers at other schools through a shared folder for those involved in international classrooms in the city.

3.1.3 Provision of information from school to home

Information provided from school to home is generally categorized into three areas: “preparing for school entry”, “school life, classes, and events”, and “further education”. In particular, providing information about further education is crucial for career development. Among the guardians of children with foreign connections, there are many who have not received Japanese schooling and therefore lack the knowledge or experience of the school culture that serves as a foundation, or who are unfamiliar with Japanese documents. Therefore, if information from the school is provided only in Japanese, it may not be conveyed appropriately or accurately. This can lead to difficulties for children with foreign connections, such as starting later than other Japanese children or being unable to fully engage in their education. Therefore, situations where accessing information is difficult can affect children's motivation and future options, as they need to adjust to the Japanese school environment after coming to Japan or transferring from a foreign school. In areas with a high concentration of foreign residents, there are examples of schools that have a well-established system for translating documents, or where interpreters and native language support staff make efforts to communicate with guardians in a way that makes it easier for them to understand what they need to know, and to avoid providing one-way information.

3.1.4 Information sharing between schools: board of education → elementary and junior high schools, elementary schools → junior high schools, junior high schools → high schools

The situation of children with foreign connections cannot be fully understood solely from their nationality or name. Information sharing between teachers within schools, from the Board of Education to elementary and junior high schools, and during transitions from elementary to junior high school and from junior high school to high school, can be crucial factors in ensuring that children receive continuous support for their education and career development. For example, in Hamamatsu City, Shizuoka Prefecture, the Board of Education provides guidance during enrollment, transfer, or relocation, and compiles information on the timing of arrival in Japan, the language proficiency of the child and their guardians, and their future career plans, which is then shared with the schools. When elementary school students transition to junior high school, the junior high school teachers responsible for foreign students visit the elementary school to receive information about the new students (such as their Japanese language proficiency). The junior high school works closely with

the elementary school while also referring to data from the city's Board of Education. When transitioning from junior high school to high school, information on language proficiency and academic ability is collected during the entrance exam process for students who enter through the admission quotas for foreigners. For students with foreign connections who are admitted through the general entrance exam, information is gathered from their junior high school to the extent possible at the time of admission. In addition, in areas with a high concentration of foreign residents, there are cases where NPOs provide initial adaptation guidance and language and learning support starting before preschool. As a result, these NPOs possess a wealth of information about students' individual circumstances and family situations, which they share with the schools and teachers.

3.1.5 Attitudes towards learning, academic abilities, and self-esteem in high school.

The interviewees' living and school environments were influenced by factors such as moving due to their guardians' work. Especially during elementary and junior high school, they were not always able to choose where they went to school. From the interviewees, it was shared that how their self-esteem, academic ability, and motivation to study declined due to the struggles and conflicts they experienced in elementary and junior high school when they first came to Japan. However, there were also many cases where, by experiencing the process of choosing their own path to "high school" for the first time, they were able to make a fresh start in a new environment that suited them, and realize their own potential and the expansion of their world. For example, "I felt that I was behind in my learning language at elementary and junior high school, and my attitude towards learning was passive. However, through the experience of preparing for the high school entrance exam, I realized that if I studied until I understood, I could succeed. After entering high school, studying became enjoyable, and my academic ability improved. I now know how to study. I was recommended by my high school teacher to switch to a class for students preparing for further education and to major in English and my native language at university. Although I had thought that going on to university was not an option for me, I started aiming for it." There was also an example of an interviewee who said, "From elementary and junior high school, I had to miss school to interpret for my guardians, so I couldn't keep up with the lessons and found it difficult to fit in, which led to school truancy. However, when I enrolled in a high school that matched my academic abilities, my situation improved in terms of both academic performance and friendships. I became more proactive in school events and activities, and I met a teacher who understood me, which helped me recover my sense of self-esteem."

3.2. Community and Family

3.2.1 Involvement with local governments, NPOs, etc.

The history is that the efforts for accepting foreigners have progressed more through local governments than the Japanese government, and the support methods of each local government vary depending on the situation of the foreign residents. The cities such as Hamamatsu in Shizuoka Prefecture, Toyota in Aichi Prefecture, Oizumi in Gunma Prefecture, and Suzuka in Mie Prefecture, which have long been known as areas with large populations of Latin American Nikkei roots, have a history of migrant workers gathering in industrial zones, with communities developing through the connections between businesses, local governments, and local people. However, even though these areas are home to Latin American Nikkei, the timing and circumstances of their arrival vary depending on the location. Additionally, there are differences in the initiatives of local governments and educational systems, as well as variations in the budget scale and human resources available to enhance these efforts. It is also important to note that the resources and quality of support available in areas known as 'dispersed areas' are limited. In addition, it is important to note that NPOs are not available in all parts of Japan. While there is a high demand for NPOs among children with foreign connections, there are numerous sustainability challenges, such as maintaining NPO operations and activities, securing human resources, and ensuring funding. Therefore, it is essential that NPOs receive support from the government.

(1) The current situation of learning and language support classes run by local governments, NPOs, etc.

Among the interviewees, there were several people who had attended learning and language support classes run by local governments and NPOs, as well as pull-out classes at elementary and junior high schools. It was shared that guardians attended these classes to receive support for academic and Japanese language learning, based on information they received from the Latin American community or the school, or to continue learning their native language in preparation for returning to Brazil, Peru, etc., in the future. In some cases, children

who attend foreign schools may wish to attend classes run by NPOs or other organizations. Although NPOs or other organizations that run classes are not present in every area, in regions with a high concentration of foreign residents, they have provided support for children in various situations, such as helping with academic subjects and Japanese language learning after arriving in Japan, or serving as supplementary lessons for children born and raised in Japan who are struggling to keep up with their schoolwork.

(2) Classrooms run by local governments, NPOs, etc., where individuals feel that their presence is acknowledged.

Even if they speak their native language at home with their guardians, many children are more proficient in Japanese. As a result, they are unable to express their thoughts and concerns about school life in their native language to their guardians. Even if they can, it is often difficult for guardians who have not experienced the Japanese education system or school culture to fully understand. Consequently, many children end up consulting with staff or teachers at NPOs or other organizations who are familiar with Japanese. Being able to express themselves and have their words understood in the classes run by NPOs and support groups helped them feel “accepted for who they were, including their native language and culture.” Additionally, having friends who shared similar experiences and concerns, and who were easy to talk to, regardless of age, was also a great help. There are also many NPOs that support a wide range of generations, from preschoolers to high school students and adults, and it is common to see university students interacting with elementary and junior high school students. Simply attending Japanese schools is not always an easy experience, but it can become a meaningful opportunity.

(3) Support for further education and career development by local governments, NPOs, etc.

NPOs and other organizations also provide support for further education and career development. Examples of providing information on advancement to high school include high school entrance guidance, university and career guidance, sharing experiences and exchanges with senior students, and individual consultations with various universities, colleges of technology, and companies. In some cases, schools and local government administrative bodies have collaborated to create opportunities to introduce seniors who are active in society. In areas with a high concentration of foreign residents, there are examples of NPOs operating classrooms that provide learning support for high school entrance exams. In addition to hearing about cases where individuals used the information on further education provided by NPOs when entering or continuing their studies, it was also heard that there was a student who “received support from an NPO in preparing for high school entrance exams and successfully passed them.”

(4) Continuing involvement with support groups after becoming a university student or joining the workforce

In many cases, the people interviewed continued their involvement with NPOs and other organizations even after becoming adults. Several individuals shifted their position from “being supported” to “providing support” as they continued their involvement. Some people say that helping children today has helped them understand themselves in the past. Others express a strong desire to be involved in supporting children with foreign connections in the future, or to contribute in some way, even if it is not in the form of a job. Even after completing their education or transitioning from being recipients of support to providing support, many people continue to be involved with NPOs and other organizations. The connections they foster have become an essential and irreplaceable part of their lives.

(5) Connection and attachment to the local area

Many of the interviewees had experienced moving to different parts of Japan due to their guardians' employment status. There were also many people who moved repeatedly within the same prefecture or city. Several people who deepened their attachment to their hometowns and considered finding employment or planning their lives there, by receiving support from their neighbors in the areas where they had lived for a long time or where they had grown up during elementary and junior high school. Some local governments are sending messages to local residents such as “No one will be left behind,” “Coexistence, living together with foreigners is an important issue,” and “The education of foreign children will be guaranteed as a human right.” It is also learned that some of the interviewees want to continue living in their hometowns and build their careers there in the future.

3.2.2 Involvement with the Latin American Community

The Latin American community in Japan has established itself in regions with a strong manufacturing presence. This is largely due to the Japanese industrial sector's need to address labor shortages in manufacturing, which has led to the clustering of these communities in such regions.

(1) Region-based Latin American community

The interviewee, born and raised in Yokohama City, Kanagawa Prefecture, has parents with roots in both Okinawa and Latin America. Yokohama's Tsurumi Ward is known for its large population of residents with connections to Okinawa and Latin America. Within this community, the interviewee took part in activities such as learning Spanish, Peruvian music, and dance. This was driven by the mother's wish for "her children to have a place where they belong outside of school and home." The interviewee entered university to study Latin American Nikkei communities and reconnected with his roots at various stages of her life, such as being interviewed by newspapers about her connections to the Okinawan community. She built her self-esteem while valuing and nurturing this connection.

(2) Latin American community passing down its home culture and native language

The interviewee was actively involved in a music band founded by her father, which featured music from her home country, and participated in these activities alongside her peers. Through her involvement in music activities, she gained confidence in her home culture and spoke about how this helped her develop a sense of self-worth, making her feel, "I can do this." She also discovered that there were people in Japan who understood and embraced her home culture, which positively contributed to the formation of her identity. She also mentioned that although her parents had come to Japan first and lived apart for many years, participating in music activities together helped strengthen their family bonds.

The Latin American community plays an important role in acquiring and maintaining native languages. Language classes organized by local governments and NPOs often include participants with Latin American roots who speak Spanish or Portuguese. Attending these classes allows children to communicate in their native language with peers who share the same roots.

(3) Church-based Latin American community

The main religion in Central and South America is Christianity, primarily Catholicism, and many people continue to attend church after coming to Japan. Churches serve as meeting places for those with Latin American roots and venues for gathering and sharing information. Interviewees shared that priests and pastors at the church listened to them with genuine concern, supported their career and educational paths, and provided advice, having a significant impact on their lives.

(4) Latin American community contributing to career development

Interviewees shared multiple examples of how connections with others of Latin American roots have contributed to their career development. The ability to use encounters as opportunities and build networks is essential. One example is a Japanese language class started by an interviewee at the request of his father. The class gained recognition within the Latin American community, leading to an increasing number of people wanting to join, and it became a Japanese language class deeply rooted in the local ethnic community⁷. The interviewee is currently an English teacher at local junior high and high schools attended by many children with foreign connections. His career has been featured in the *Asahi Shimbun*, and he has also served as a speaker at events such as those organized by the Brazilian Embassy in Japan in Toyohashi, Aichi Prefecture, serving as a role model⁸ emerging from the local Latin American community.

⁷ In this study, the term refers to the existence of networks formed when people with roots in a particular ethnicity or country come together in a specific area, leading to the creation of living environments that embody the cultural practices of that ethnicity. This results in the formation of ethnic organizations and businesses, and these networks serve as the foundation for connections based on cultural traditions, such as events and religious activities, as well as for information exchange. (Based on Takamichi Kajita (1994), "Foreign Workers in Japan," NHK Books, and Hyewon Shin (2016), "A Reflection of 'Takadanobaba' as a Multilayered Node from the Survey of 'Myanmar Community,'" *Komaba Studies in Society* No. 26.)

⁸ The 'role model' envisioned in this survey does not refer to individuals who meet certain standards, but rather to people whom children would aspire to be like.

3.2.3 Involvement with Guardians

Decisions regarding the living and educational environments, as well as the timing during childhood, such as the timing of arrival in Japan, where to live, whether to enroll in a Japanese public school or a foreign school, and whether to settle in Japan or return to their home country, are made by the guardians. In this process, guardians' involvement and their educational policies play a crucial role. Moreover, communication between guardians and children also impacts the lives and character development of children with foreign connections.

(1) Guardians' involvement and their educational policies

Many of the interviewees were people who either “came to Japan at the time their parents came to Japan for work” or “were born in Japan.” After arriving, they experienced a range of educational pathways, including enrolling in public or foreign schools. It was also revealed that many guardians of the interviewees had originally planned to return to their home country after completing their period of migrant work. Some interviewees also stated that “We had planned to return to our home country someday, but due to financial difficulties, we ended up staying in Japan and gradually lost motivation for distance learning⁹ from our home country and language studies.” There were also cases where they “were forced to resettle in Japan due to family circumstances despite the parents' wish to have their children educated in Brazil.” To have multiple options regarding education and career paths in response to changes, guardians need to understand the educational curriculum of their respective countries and have an envisioned approach to career development.

The guardians' involvement in the education of the interviewees was generally strong. Many interviewees shared experiences such as, “My parents always encouraged me to study hard,” “I was told to go to school,” “I was scolded for poor grades,” and “I was told from a young age that I must go on to high school,” indicating their guardians' involvement in their education. However, it was also observed that many guardians did not have the time, energy, or mental capacity to develop long-term educational plans to support their children or to gather information.

(2) Guardians' policies regarding career development

Most of the interviewees' guardians continued working as factory dispatch workers through migrant work in dual-income households. Based on that experience, many of the guardians told their children, “You need to study and go on to high school and university because I want you to have a regular job, not a dispatch job.” Some guardians said, “I want you to work without going on to high school” or “You don't need to go on to university,” but generally, many guardians respected their children's wishes, saying, “I want you to have a future with fewer hardships than mine.” It was also noted that many guardians supported their children's wishes regarding whether to work in Japan or in their home country. However, when guardians have not experienced education or career development in Japan, they are not familiar with the Japanese education system or entrance exams, which inevitably limits their ability to advise and support their children. Among the interviewees, there were also many who chose to gather information from school teachers, NPO class instructors, and friends, independently select their educational and career paths, and then obtain their guardians' approval.

(3) The family's financial situation

It was frequently observed that, driven by the desire to minimize financial burdens on their guardians, children took the initiative to find and choose options such as “enrolling in public high schools or national/public universities,” “attending vocational schools or universities within commuting distance from home,” “aiming for admission as scholarship students to have tuition fees waived,” “gathering information on scholarships,” and “using earnings from part-time jobs during high school to cover tuition fees.”

(4) Guardian and sibling support for learning at home

Among the interviewees' guardians, there were many who were highly dedicated to education when they were in their home country. However, there were also cases where guardians, feeling that “I had brought my children to Japan for my own convenience and am causing them to struggle with life and studies in an

⁹ Among the interviewees, there were several people of Peruvian descent who had experience with distance learning from Peru even after coming to Japan.

unfamiliar environment,” did not force their children to study, even when their academic performance in Japan was poor. The reasons for this include, “I can’t help with studying at home due to language, experience, and time constraints,” “I can’t provide guidance because I don’t have experience with Japanese schools,” “I can’t envision the process of preparing for further education,” and “My child is more proficient in Japanese.” The interviewees consistently stated, “I wasn’t able to receive support with my studies from Japanese schools at home.” It was also mentioned that “not being able to fully understand the study material in either their native language or Japanese was one of the factors that contributed to a delay in academic language learning.” There were also some interviewees who linked the lack of home learning support to their motivation for finding ways to learn Japanese, setting aside time for independent study, and developing the motivation to attend school.

(5) Guardians' experience with education in Japan and availability of information

Many of the interviewees' guardians had no experience with receiving education in Japan. There were even some guardians who mentioned in the interviews that they “did not know that compulsory education in Japan ends at junior high school and that admission exams are required for advancing to high school.” Language barriers also played a role, and few guardians were in a situation where they could receive sufficient and appropriate information on school life and further education from schools, local governments, or NPOs when needed. In regions with a high concentration of foreign residents, communications from schools are often translated into the guardians' native language, and the use of interpreters during parent-teacher conferences has become more common. However, it is not easy for guardians who work late into the night to fully attend to their children's school and daily lives.

On the other hand, even in such situations, there have been cases where guardians actively communicated with schools and NGOs to obtain information and advocated for schools to offer Japanese language classes for their children. There were also cases where guardians actively attended church, deepened their connections with others from the same background to gather information, and received advice on further education from priests.

(6) Understanding of the Japanese language and culture among guardians

Guardians often find themselves in situations where they do not have sufficient proficiency in Japanese when they first arrive in Japan. Even if they become able to engage in conversations limited to work-related topics, it is often difficult for them to manage daily conversations. As a result, there are many cases where children act as interpreters for their guardians. For children who struggle to adapt to the changes brought by coming to Japan and may experience a temporary decline in self-esteem, there can be resistance to their guardians speaking their native language and coming to school without a full understanding of Japanese cultural practices, sometimes leading to negative feelings toward their guardians and their roots. Such sentiments have also been heard from interviewees. However, as they grew older, some shared that they realized, “My parents also struggled with coming to Japan, living conditions, and economic situations,” and that “My parents told me that they understood what I went through at school.”

(7) Passing down the native language from guardians

The passing down of the native language from guardians also influences the formation of children's identity and the enhancement of their self-esteem. Among the interviewees, many had the rule of speaking their native language at home, and there were cases where the passing down of their home culture occurred naturally along with the language. There were also cases where guardians enrolled their children in native language classes within their communities or Latin American community, exposing them to their native language and culture, which led to improvements in their identity and self-esteem and motivated them to learn. Some interviewees, upon becoming high school or university students, developed an interest in their native language and home culture. This led them to relearn their native language or study abroad in their home country, where they made new discoveries about their identity and found their own path. In such cases, there were observed influences later on, such as developing an interest in jobs that utilize their native language, work supporting people with foreign connections, or caregiving services targeting foreigners in local areas with a large population of Latin American Nikkei.

(8) Communication with guardians

Communication between guardians and children is particularly important in shaping personality and fostering

identity. When children with foreign connections live in Japan, it is common for them to use their “native language at home and Japanese in all other situations.” As they become more familiar with Japanese through school life and learning, conversations and communication with guardians who speak their native language may become limited. In the interviews, it was shared that “when parents speak in their native language and children respond in Japanese, the children can understand whether what the parents are saying is 'good' or 'bad,' but they struggle to understand the reasons behind it, and parents cannot explain in Japanese. This limits their ability to have deep conversations with each other.” Moreover, challenges arise when guardians, lacking experience in the Japanese school system, struggle to understand their children's difficulties with learning, school life, friendships, cultural customs, and related issues. As children enter adolescence, it is often observed that they begin to feel frustration or embarrassment over their parents' inability to speak Japanese and, in many cases, refrain from communicating as much, thinking, “My parents won't understand anyway” or “They already worry enough from working hard every day, so I don't want to worry them further.”

(9) Isolation of guardians of children with foreign connections and the children themselves, and measures to address it

It was also found that, not just the children but the guardians as well, are often struggling to adapt to life and work in Japan, making support from schools, NPOs, and other organizations essential to prevent family isolation. An example of preventing isolation between guardians and children at school is that interpreters not only provide interpretation during conferences such as parent-teacher meetings but also act as a confidant and support system for guardians who are anxious or stressed after coming to Japan. Interpreters regularly engage in frequent conversations with guardians and organize events such as home-country cuisine events and workshops conducted by financial planners to foster connections with guardians, draw out their genuine thoughts, and create opportunities to build trust. In addition to school initiatives, there have been cases where an NPO in Tsurumi ward, Yokohama, Kanagawa Prefecture, started a native language class for children. This created a space that not only energized the children but also the parents, bringing together people of Latin American Nikkei roots from outside the district for information exchange.

3.3 Language Learning (Japanese, Native Language)

For people with foreign connections, language (whether Portuguese, Spanish, Japanese, etc.) plays a role not only in learning and academic improvement but also in identity formation, connections with family and the community, and ties to both Japan and their home country, influencing their growth process.

3.3.1 Understanding of Multilingualism by Those Around Them

Among the interviewees who received their education and developed their careers in Japan, it was observed that as their living environment shifted from being centered around their native language to primarily using Japanese, their proficiency in Japanese increasingly approached that of a first language. Moreover, due to limited opportunities to use their native language, there were some interviewees who felt that their proficiency in their native language was inadequate. There were also cases where, due to guardians' circumstances, children were compelled to travel back and forth to their home country, resulting in a shift in the balance of the languages they used at school and in daily life with each move.

Even with differences in the timing of their arrival, the language used at home, and their language acquisition levels, children with foreign connections engage in thinking, expression, and communication in both Japanese and their native language, contributing to their personality development. The interviewed NPO explained, “When children with foreign connections are asked why they don't confide in their parents about their worries, they often respond, ‘I don't want to worry them, they wouldn't understand, or they can't comprehend.’” However, these reasons are complex and rooted in language-related issues. Support from the people around them is essential, as these children often try to express themselves using two or more languages. Children with multiple languages and cultures have unique ways of developing their language and conceptual understanding. Therefore, it is important to recognize that their periods of growth may vary and to support their development with a long-term perspective.

3.3.2 Importance of Language Support that Respects Native Languages

Children who come to Japan often acquire Japanese through school education, support from NGOs, self-study, and other means. Japanese is indispensable in various aspects of life, including daily living in Japan, school life, communication with others, and academic improvement. At the same time, proficiency in their

native language also has a significant impact not only on daily life but also on learning subjects and other language learning. If their native language proficiency is insufficient, there is a risk that their acquisition of Japanese or other language learning will also remain inadequate¹⁰. One interviewee said, “After arriving in Japan, there were both Japanese and native language education in the Japanese elementary school I attended, so I didn’t feel any particular difficulty in adjusting to life in Japan or in my studies.” As mentioned in the previous section, it has been reaffirmed that it is necessary to provide support with an attitude of respect for the language children use, regardless of whether it is Japanese or their native language, while understanding that children who use multiple languages are trying to express themselves through both.

3.3.3 Language Influencing Identity Formation (Including Relationships between Japan and Home Country)

Many interviewees reported using their native language at home. However, among siblings, as they grew older, a mix of Japanese and their native language was often observed, gradually shifting to conversations conducted solely in Japanese. In some cases, their proficiency in their native language, which serves as a shared language with their parents, declined. Along with this, during adolescence, some expressed a desire to “speak only Japanese to behave as much like a Japanese person as possible,” questioned or felt embarrassed about acting as interpreters for their parents, and experienced identity conflicts, wondering, “Which country do I truly belong to?” However, with maturity and personal growth, many began to gain confidence in their roots and language. For example, some stated, “In junior high school, I hated my roots and ‘wondered why I was different from everyone else.’ But now, I take pride in them. I’ve realized that I don’t have to force myself to conform, and being different from others is not a bad thing. It’s a strength.” These accounts illustrate positive changes in identity formation as they embraced their roots.

3.3.4 Language as a Strength in Career Development

Language proficiency can directly impact opportunities for further education and employment. In scenarios such as high school entrance exams, university entrance exams, and job interviews, proficiency in Japanese or other languages is often required. For individuals with foreign roots, it has been reaffirmed that possessing proficiency in multiple languages, such as their native language, Japanese, and English, serves as a strength.

3.4 Career Development

3.4.1 Leveraging Strengths and Passions in Career Building

In interviews, some shared “how they successfully incorporated their language skills and cultural backgrounds into developing their educational and career paths.” There were multiple examples of interviewees enhancing their proficiency in both Japanese and their native language to pursue careers as educators and Japanese language support staff involved in the education of children with foreign connections, medical interpreters, or professionals serving clients with Latin American roots or working in departments engaged in overseas trade. These examples illustrate how leveraging language skills can lead to fulfilling careers. Some also shared how their love for Western music and movies motivated them to improve their English skills, not limited to their native language. Others mentioned that they felt unable to fully express themselves through communication in multiple languages and found that expressing themselves through art and illustration felt more natural. There are those who returned to their home country to challenge themselves and pursue football in its most authentic environment, using it as their strength. Furthermore, many interviewees mentioned that they want to serve as bridges between their home country and Japan, leveraging their experiences and awareness of challenges as individuals connected to foreign roots as strengths, while maintaining a strong interest in multicultural coexistence and supporting people with Latin American roots.

Many interviewees responded, “We lack information. It is precisely because we are in situations such as having limited financial resources and starting behind Japanese friends in terms of language and learning that we needed to take action and find our own path.” Specifically, they mentioned “setting goals and working backwards,” “believing that there are ways and persevering in gathering information,” “studying and

¹⁰ The state of limited bilingualism or double-limited bilingualism. This refers to a condition where neither language has developed to an age-appropriate level, which is believed to negatively affect intellectual development. Related terms include proficient bilingualism, a case where both languages have developed to a high level, appropriate for the individual’s age, or partial bilingualism, a case where one language has developed to an age-appropriate level, but the other language remains underdeveloped.

investing in oneself are never a waste,” and “you can start over even after failure.” There was also the presence of educators and supporters from organizations such as NPOs who provided encouragement and opportunities that helped interviewees become aware of their interests and strengths. For example, comments from school teachers and NPO supporters such as “Your English pronunciation is clear,” “Wouldn't it be good to do this?” and “It's cool to be able to speak two languages” helped build the interviewees' confidence.

3.4.2 Advancing to High School (Barriers to Further Education and How to Overcome Them)

In contemporary Japanese society, pursuing further education through high school is an important first step for broadening future options. However, children with foreign connections and their guardians, including the interviewees, often lack experience and awareness regarding Japanese high school entrance exams. Japanese high schools include full-time, part-time schooling system, correspondence, and specialized schools, making it challenging to find a school that matches one's career goals and interests. It is also necessary to understand that the eligibility criteria and entrance exam measures for admission quotas for foreigners vary by municipality. Thus, obtaining information about prospective schools for further education and entrance exam methods is essential. There are also many language and learning challenges, which require support for supplementary lessons, study assistance, exam applications, and document preparation for the high school entrance exams.

Barriers to Advancing to High School and How to Overcome Them (Based on Interview Results)

Barriers to advancing to high school	How to overcome them
- Parental opposition to advancing to high school due to financial circumstances	- Persuade parents or have a junior high school teacher explain the situation - Enroll in a part-time high school and work part-time during the day
- Insufficient learning of the Japanese curriculum - Japanese abilities/academic abilities are insufficient for entrance exams	- Advance to a public high school through recommendation - Advance to a foreign school - Advance to a high school in the home country
- Grades and school evaluation scores do not meet the requirements for the desired high school	- Advance to a correspondence or a part-time high school - Advance to a foreign school
- Unable to enter the desired high school due to the large number of subjects required for the general entrance exam	- Designated school recommendation - Choose a school where strengths, such as English language skills, can be advantageous for the entrance exam - Utilize the admission quotas for foreigners (in cases of recent arrival in Japan)
- Difficulty in obtaining information about high school advancement from foreign schools or the Brazilian community	- Collect information through learning support classes operated by NPOs or Japanese language schools

3.4.3 Career Guidance in High School

At a high school in Hamamatsu City, Shizuoka Prefecture (where students with foreign connections account for 12% of the total student body), Japanese language support staff, taking a central role, have been advising students and their guardians to adopt the perspective that “high school is not the goal but the starting point.” Since guardians often lack knowledge and information about Japanese society, the school has been providing tailored career guidance for each student, focusing on pathways toward advancing to university education or finding employment. At a part-time high school in Hamamatsu City, Shizuoka Prefecture (where students with foreign connections make up about 20% of the student body), it was noted that graduating from high school tends to be the primary goal, with students showing low motivation for advancing to higher education or finding employment. Despite the school's dedicated efforts, the challenge of effectively boosting students' motivation to learn has been highlighted. In high schools, it is essential to support students in deepening their self-understanding and acquiring the skills and knowledge necessary for their future paths, enabling them to make career choices aligned with their interests and values.

3.4.4 Advancing to University (Barriers to Further Education and How to Overcome Them)

The higher education advancement rate to universities and other institutions among high school students who require Japanese language support (46.6%)¹¹ is still lower than that of general high school students (75.0%). On the other hand, in the interviews, many participants expressed that they wanted to advance to university education with an eye toward their desired direction and future career path.

In the interviews, there were many cases where the family's economic situation was a significant barrier to pursuing further education at the university level. However, there were also accounts of overcoming this barrier through communication with guardians, gathering information on scholarships, and earning tuition fees independently. Moreover, even with the approval of guardians, there are still barriers to pursuing further education at the university level. For example, while some students may wish to apply to private universities with fewer entrance exam subjects, financial constraints often limit them to public institutions. This often results in difficulties with subjects unique to Japan and challenges in understanding exam questions written in Japanese. In such cases, the key was for students to receive support from high school teachers who conducted research, to consult with NPOs, or to visit university student affairs offices to learn about and become aware of information regarding designated school recommendations, AO entrance exams, and special admissions.

Barriers to Advancing to University and How to Overcome Them (Based on Interview Results)

Barriers to advancing to university	How to overcome them
- Financial circumstances may prevent payment of tuition fees - Parents are not supportive of taking university entrance exams	- Aim for employment - Use scholarships and educational loans - Take a leave of absence after enrollment to earn tuition fees - Work in a factory while attending a correspondence university - Save up for further education by working part-time after graduating from high school
- Insufficient learning of the Japanese curriculum - Japanese abilities/academic abilities are insufficient for entrance exams	- Pass the Japanese Language Proficiency Test after graduating from high school and prepare for entrance exams - Advance to a university in one's home country and then transfer to a Japanese university - Study abroad in a third country and transfer to a Japanese university (academic programs for international students¹²)
- Public universities have many entrance exam subjects	- Designated school recommendation - Take entrance exams for private universities with fewer required subjects - Take entrance exams for public universities with AO entrance exams - Advance to a university in a third country with easier entrance exam subjects and lower levels
- Private universities with fewer entrance exam subjects have higher tuition fees	- Choose a nearby public university - Use scholarships and educational loans
- Difficulty in obtaining information about university advancement from foreign schools or the Brazilian community	- Advance to a high school in one's home country with an eye toward university in one's home country

3.4.5 University Life

Interviewees shared that “advancing to university significantly expanded their world compared to high school.” Many of them found their future direction through experiences such as studying, making new friends, and meeting university professors who became influential mentors. There were also many cases of studying

¹¹ From the “Survey Results on the Acceptance of Children Needing Japanese Language Instruction for FY2023 (August 2024, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)).

¹² https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/koutou/ryugaku/1370888.htm

abroad in their home country, which allowed them to view themselves and Japan from an objective perspective. This experience also served as an opportunity to reflect on whether to pursue a career in Japan or their home country and to consider which environment was better suited to them. Moreover, there were cases where experiences such as taking a two-year leave from university to work in a factory to cover tuition fees led to decisions about future career paths, such as becoming a learning support staff member. These various experiences, both inside and outside of university, contributed to their individual career choices.

Opinions such as “I want to get a job after high school, just like my parents and friends” or “I don't enjoy studying, but I want to go on to a vocational school to learn skills and enter the workforce as soon as possible” should also be respected. It is also important to note that financial preparation is necessary for pursuing further education at a university. However, considering the examples from the interviewees, it can be inferred that university life can serve as an opportunity to broaden one's horizons.

3.4.6 Part-time Jobs, Employment, and Career Changes

(1) Part-time job experience

Most of the interviewees had experience in multiple part-time jobs before reaching their current positions. The types of part-time jobs varied, including positions in restaurants, factories, and as cram school tutors, but they also provided opportunities to improve Japanese language skills, deepen understanding of Japanese society and culture, and meet Japanese friends. Interviewees who clearly stated that “the purpose of their part-time work was not only to earn money but also to acquire Japanese language skills and cultural practices” were often individuals with experience in foreign schools, those who came to Japan at an older age, or those who returned to Japan. It is evident that choosing to learn Japanese language skills and cultural practices outside of school and study, such as in cases where individuals were unable to complete the entire Japanese educational curriculum due to repatriation to their home country, has been beneficial for their subsequent career development. Moreover, for interviewees who stated that “part-time work was beneficial for enhancing their skills and experience,” the companies they worked for played an important role. These companies, even if they were hiring foreign workers for the first time, actively recruited them and were impressed by their sincerity and diligent attitude, often providing support beyond the scope of work.

Among the interviewees who started working after graduating from high school, there were cases where finding a job or working style that suited them did not happen immediately. They often went through experiences such as part-time work, day labor, and non-regular employment before eventually finding a career that suited them. There were also cases where interviewees, after gaining experience through part-time work, eventually achieved their dream of starting their own business.

(2) Job hunting

Among the interviewees who started working as new university graduates, there were multiple responses indicating that “the job-hunting process in Japan was unique.” This was because their guardians did not have experience with it, so they were unfamiliar with the unique system and approach of job hunting in Japan. This was not just about the style, such as wearing recruitment suits, but also included stories of failures related to techniques, such as how to answer questions. With more and more people thinking, “I want to study in Japan and build my career here,” or “I want to start a family in Japan,” the immense effort they have invested can sometimes lead to disappointing outcomes in the brief moments of job tests and interviews. There have also been cases where individuals, after receiving education in Japan and then moving to Brazil with the goal of finding a job there, faced difficulties due to not being aware of the employment requirements in Brazil.

(3) Stepping up and building a career through job changes

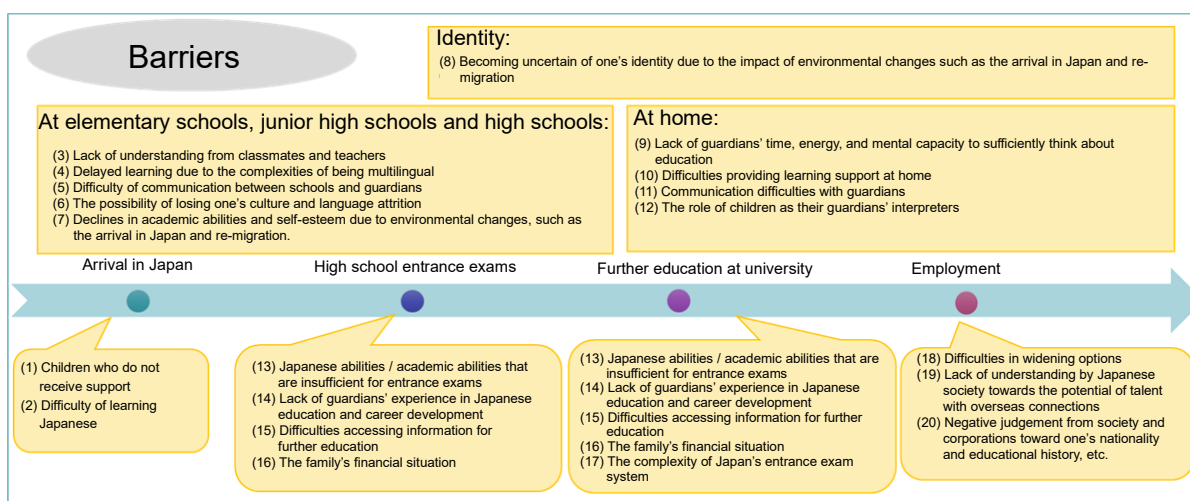
Among the interviewees, there were those who, through repeatedly changing jobs, demonstrated persistence and steadily advanced to the next stage, building their careers based on their experiences and accumulated knowledge. For example, there were cases where individuals moved to a new job to advance their careers after acquiring IT skills at their first company, where customer service experience as a salesperson became the foundation for future work, where on-site experience at a factory was leveraged as a strength when transitioning to a sales position in the same industry, and where working at a Japanese company provided the experience needed to become independent as a freelancer. There were also some who, after working in various positions, discovered their strengths and weaknesses, while others, after gaining experience in multiple jobs, launched their own businesses in fields where they excelled. While not limited to people with foreign connections, gaining diverse experiences for career development is effective and can help expand

one's perspective, options, potential, and strengths.

However, there were also examples, such as interviewees sharing experiences of “not being hired because they were presumed to be foreign based on their names,” indicating that some companies do not have a clear image of how to work with people with foreign connections. Even companies with a track record of hiring may not consider possibilities beyond traditional roles for workers, and there are also companies that have little to no experience in hiring foreign employees. It was confirmed that improving the recruitment and human resource development systems of Japanese companies is also important.

4. Summary: Barriers to Career Development and Factors that Helped Overcome Them

This depicts the “barriers” and “factors that helped overcome them” in the career development of interviewees.



Factors that helped to overcome barriers

(1) School life		
Barriers	Factors that helped overcome barriers	
(3)(4)	Understanding and encouragement for children with foreign connections	- Timely encouragement from educators - Training opportunities provided by the Board of Education to schools - Having equal relationships with friends
(1)(2)(4)(7)	Individual support through “pull-out” classes, international classrooms, and regular lessons	- Guidance for initial adaption - “Pull-out” classes and international classrooms - Individual support and education focused on international understanding within regular lessons
(5)(12)	Consultation channels and information sharing through communication between schools and guardians	- Provision of easy-to-understand information on schools and further education - Provision of easy-to-understand community information - Translation of announcements and repetition of important details - Consultation channels through communication between interpreters, etc., and guardians
(4)(7)(8)	A medium-to long-term approach offering broad perspectives to support the diverse growth of each child	- Information relay from the Board of Education to elementary and junior high schools - Information sharing at transition from elementary to junior high school and high school - Support for the selection of a high school that suits the child
(2) The Community and Family		
Barriers	Factors that helped to overcome barriers	
(2)(4)(6)(7)(8)(10)	Ongoing and diverse support from local governments, NPOs, etc.	- Support classes for Japanese and native languages - Learning support classes - Support for children, including those attending non-public schools

		- Nurturing a sense of security of being welcome and accepted - Provision of information and support for further education and careers
(6)(7)(8)	A foundation rooted in the Latin American community	- Preservation of native languages and cultures - Information sharing within the ethnic community
(15)(17)(18)	Connections with the local community	- Provision of information not offered by guardians and schools - Fostering a sense of familiarity toward Japan and local communities
(9)(14)	Support from guardians for education and career development	- Understanding from guardians toward their children's career development - Involvement and educational policies of guardians
(6)(8)(11)	Communication between guardians and their children, along with prevention of isolation	- Improving the understanding of the Japanese language and culture among guardians - Preservation of native languages and cultures by guardians - Support for guardians from schools and communities
(3) Language learning		
Barriers	Factors that helped to overcome barriers	
(4)(6)(7)(8)(11)	Language support to promote understanding of multilingualism and respect for native languages	- Understanding the diverse growth processes of multilingual children by those around them - Language support at schools that respect the children's native languages - Making use of native language classes within the local community or NPOs
(7)(13)(18)(19)(20)	Acquiring multiple languages with an eye towards career development	- Learning the Japanese language with an eye towards employment in Japan - Language learning toward careers that leverage multilingual skills - Learning a third language, such as English
(4) Career Development		
Barriers	Factors that helped to overcome barriers	
(4)(7)(8)(13)(18)	Support for discovering strengths and interests and developing them	- Provision of opportunities to uncover strengths and interests - Provision of materials and opportunities that allow strengths and interests to grow
(9)(14)(15)(16)(18)	Career education geared toward children and their guardian	- Provision of information on the Japanese education system from elementary school - Provision of information on necessary preparation for further education at high schools and universities - Provision of opportunities to communicate with role models
(13)(14)(15)(16)	Learning support and information provision for further education at high schools	- Provision of information for further education - Support for entrance exam applications - Learning support
(13)(14)(15)(16)(17)	Learning support and information provision for career path selection after graduating from high school (such as vocational schools and universities)	- Presentation of diverse options after advancing to high school - Provision of information for further education at vocational schools and universities - Support for entrance exam applications - Learning support - Provision of information related to financial support and support for application procedures
(18)(19)(20)	Career advancement through part-time work and job changes	- Learning the Japanese language and customs through part-time work - Fostering corporate understanding of career development for foreign talent

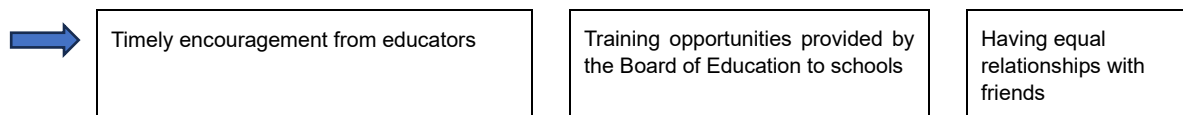
4.1 Barriers to Career Development and Factors that Helped Overcome Them

(1) Why School Life Is an Important Factor

● Understanding and encouragement for children with foreign connections

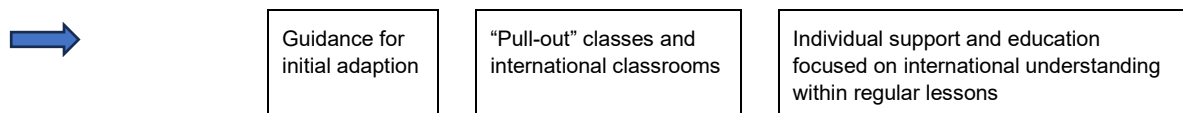
Regarding “(3) Lack of understanding from classmates and teachers” and “(4) Delayed learning due to the complexities of being multilingual”, it is essential for school staff to understand the background of each child and provide support. The impact of encouragement can be both positive and negative, depending on the individual's background and the timing of the approach, affecting both the individual and their classmates. For instance, introducing such a child as “this child has connections overseas, so let's look after him/her” may create unwanted power dynamics between the child and classmates. Therefore, sharing this background with the other students—such as ‘he/she learned Japanese from scratch, is living in an unfamiliar culture, and faces many difficulties’—will help promote understanding among them. Furthermore, it is also important to

recognize that there is a systematic issue in which children born in Japan with Japanese citizenship needing Japanese language and learning assistance may not be receiving sufficient support, and provide individual encouragement. It is beneficial to provide opportunities for Japanese children to understand the native languages and cultures of children with foreign connections through international education programs within daily classes. Additionally, rather than creating relationships of one side helping and the other receiving help, creation of an environment in which children are able to be on equal terms with each other is desired.



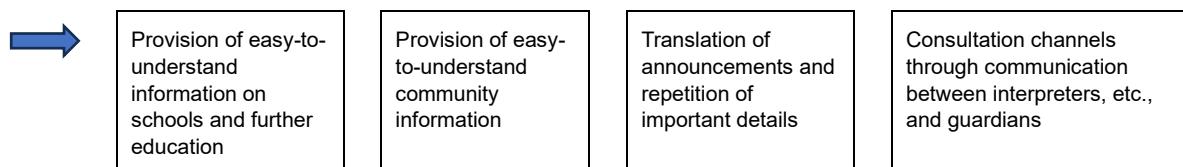
- Individual support through “pull-out” classes, international classrooms, and regular lessons

To address “(1) Children who do not receive support” and “(2) Difficulty of learning Japanese”, it is helpful to confirm the necessity of support for initial adaptation. For “(4) Delayed learning due to the complexities of being multilingual”, initiatives such as “pull-out” classes and international classrooms offer opportunities to learn the Japanese language, acquire academic language skills to keep up with their classes, and obtain knowledge about school subjects. What is more, these initiatives often become an important place for children where their existence is recognized and themselves, their native language and culture is affirmed. If they can talk with other children from foreign connections who share similar circumstances, such as their role in the family or family environment, and spend time together in a relaxed atmosphere, it can also help address situations such as “(7) Declines in academic abilities and self-esteem due to environmental changes, such as the arrival in Japan and re-migration.” Additionally, support such as teachers engaging with them during regular classes or reading sentences aloud is also helpful.



- Consultation channels and information sharing through communication between schools and guardians

Due to the “(5) Difficulty of communication between schools and guardians”, there are cases in which information provided from schools is not adequately relayed to guardians. This creates challenges for children, and they may have to take on “(12) The role of children as their guardians’ interpreters”. In terms of providing information on topics such as school enrollment, school life, and further education, there are areas where multilingual support is progressing in communities. However, it is necessary that schools continue making efforts to communicate in an easily understandable way with the guardians of children with foreign connections. This includes repeating important information and ensuring that communication does not end after a single contact. Furthermore, it is also important to have interpreters and native language support staff dispatched to schools act as a consultation channel for communication with guardians, as it prevents the provision of one-sided information and enables timely sharing of information necessary for each individual.

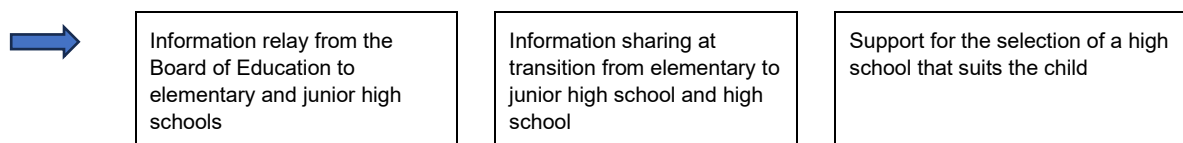


- A medium-to long-term approach to support the diverse growth of each child

In elementary (primary) and junior high schools, children often struggle with changes in their life after coming to Japan, such as their daily lives, school environment and personal relationships. These challenges often lead to “(4) Delayed learning due to the complexities of being multilingual”, “(7) Declines in academic abilities and self-esteem due to environmental changes, such as the arrival in Japan and re-migration”, and “(8) Becoming uncertain of one’s identity due to the impact of environmental changes such as the arrival in Japan and re-migration”. When these children want their guardians to listen to them, they often struggle to communicate due to the language learning situation and differences in educational experience. This can lead to them not being able to consult anyone, believing that they are not smart enough and wishing to be more

like Japanese children, making the situation more difficult than before. However, when these children enter a high school that suits them, they often experience positive changes in their attitudes toward learning, academic performance, and self-esteem. This is due to being in a brand-new school environment that provides an optimal learning pace and level, along with friends who share similar interests.

In this way, it is crucial for school staff to recognize that each child undergoes changes and growth in diverse ways and at their own pace over medium to long-term periods, and their role is to provide support necessary to draw out the children's' potential and thrive. Furthermore, to provide continuous educational support tailored to each child's situation, it is important to ensure information is transferred from the Board of Education to elementary (primary) and junior high schools, as well as between connected elementary schools and junior high schools, and between junior high schools and high schools, as is commonly practiced in areas with a high density of individuals with foreign connections. A characteristic of areas with a high density of individuals with foreign connections is that NPOs often possess extensive information about the individual circumstances and home situation for students. Sharing this information with schools and teachers serves as a valuable source for reference.

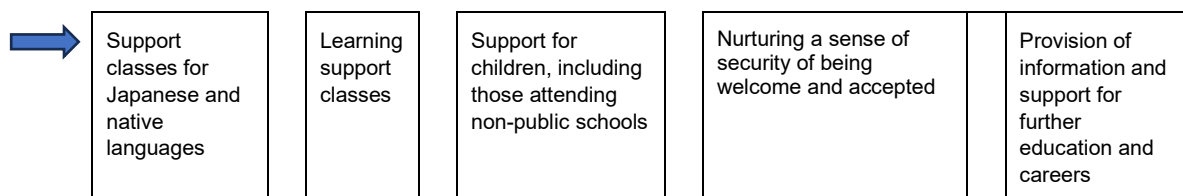


(2) Important Factors Within the Community and Family

- Ongoing and diverse support from local governments, NPOs, etc.

Learning and language support provided by local governments, NPOs, and others is also available to children who do not attend public schools in Japan. This support addresses issues such as “(2) Difficulty of learning Japanese,” “(4) Delayed learning due to the complexities of being multilingual,” “(6) The possibility of losing one’s culture and language attrition,” and “(10) Difficulties providing learning support at home.” Additionally, it offers opportunities to foster self-acceptance, self-esteem, and a sense of security in situations such as “(7) Declines in academic abilities and self-esteem due to environmental changes, such as the arrival in Japan and re-migration,” and “(8) Becoming uncertain of one’s identity due to the impact of environmental changes such as the arrival in Japan and re-migration.” It also functions as an opportunity to uncover future career options in detail and provide specific strategies and information. Some are driven by the desire to help children who have the same challenges as they used to, and go on to volunteer at the same organizations such as the NPOs that used to support them. In this way, these organizations play a crucial role by nurturing long-term relationships.

However, not all regions have this type of support organization, and not all children with foreign connections have access to support from organizations such as NPOs. Furthermore, NPOs and other organizations face various challenges such as securing budgets and staff to maintain their activities. It is important to note that the support and involvement from the government is crucial for these activities.



- A foundation rooted in the Latin American community

The Latin American community acts as a foundation to preserve native languages and cultures, foster identities, and share information regarding situations such as “(6) The possibility of losing one’s culture and language attrition”, “(7) Declines in academic abilities and self-esteem due to environmental changes, such as the arrival in Japan and re-migration”, and “(8) Becoming uncertain of one’s identity due to the impact of environmental changes such as the arrival in Japan and re-migration”. Furthermore, through leveraging their own experiences to contribute to the members of the Latin American community, such as acting as interpreters or holding Japanese language classes, it can also be an environment that nurtures role models for

the next generation.



Preservation of native languages and cultures

Information sharing within the ethnic community

- Connections with the local community

Interviewees have often experienced moving within Japan or within the same prefecture or city, due to their guardians' work situation. However, in regions where they lived for longer periods of time or during their elementary (primary) and junior high schools, or high school, they often received various types of support from neighbors. There were people who noticed how the children were doing, such as their daily life, education, further education, mental health, and engaged with them. They especially explained issues such as “(15) Difficulties accessing information for further education” and “(17) The complexity of Japan's entrance exam system”. These experiences create a deeper attachment to the children's local area, resulting in these children having to consider employment and future plans within their local region. This can also be a way to address “(18) Difficulties in widening options” within career development. Furthermore, having people with overseas connections develop an attachment to the local Japanese community in which they were born and raised may contribute towards revitalizing the region.



Provision of information not offered by guardians and schools

Fostering a sense of familiarity toward Japan and local communities

- Support from guardians for education and career development

“(9) Lack of guardians' time, energy, and mental capacity to sufficiently think about education” and “(14) Lack of guardians' experience in Japanese education and career development” can be raised as issues. In this context, having guardians show respect for their children's wishes regarding education and career development in Japan, along with providing support for learning and other areas (such as emotional support, showing that they are on their children's side, and providing words of encouragement) helps children advance toward their goals. In this situation, even if guardians themselves have not experienced education or career development in Japan, it is still important to support their child by participating in parent-teacher-student meetings with interpreters, and gathering information from outside schools to establish a direction for their child's education and career development.



Understanding from guardians toward their children's career development

Educational policies of guardians

- Communication between guardians and their children, along with prevention of isolation

Communication between guardians and their children play important roles regarding “(6) The possibility of losing one's culture and language attrition”, “(8) Becoming uncertain of one's identity due to the impact of environmental changes such as the arrival in Japan and re-migration”, and “(11) Communication difficulties with guardians”. Children often use their native language at home and Japanese at school. As children shift towards speaking mainly in Japanese, this may cause communication to weaken with guardians who speak in their native languages at home. Communication between guardians and children is particularly important in shaping personality and fostering identity. To maintain communication between guardians and their children, it is necessary to first understand the complexities of thinking and shaping their personality through multiple languages. Furthermore, it is important to enhance the understanding of the Japanese language and culture of guardians, and have them communicate the importance of native language education to their children. Furthermore, it is also important to establish systems in which school interpreters or counselors can connect the challenges these families face to schools and society for support, to prevent these families from becoming emotionally isolated. In this context, attention needs to be paid to current issues such as the lack of interpreters dispatched to schools and the need for better working conditions for them.



Improving the understanding of the Japanese language and culture among guardians

Preservation of native languages and cultures by guardians

Support for guardians from schools and communities

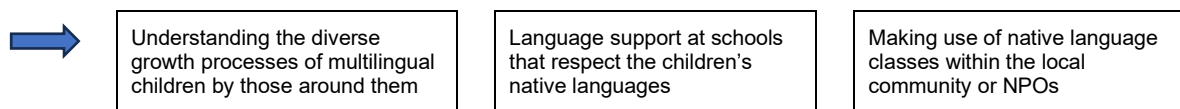
(3) Why Language Learning Is an Important Factor

- Language support to promote understanding of multilingualism and respect for native languages

Language is a tool, not only in learning and academic improvement, but also in identity formation, connections with family and the community, and ties to both Japan and their home country, as it influences the growth process of children. Many individuals with overseas connections are multilingual, and the age they arrived in Japan, language used at home, and language learning process vary for each person. There is a need for those around these individuals to understand that their thoughts, expressions, communication and personality are developed with their multiple languages. Furthermore, as children with multiple languages and cultures have unique ways of developing their language and conceptual understanding, it is important for those around them to recognize that their periods of growth may vary.

Japanese schools tend to prioritize language guidance and support for the Japanese language. The guardians, may also wish for their children to work hard on their Japanese language studies because they faced hardships with the language as well. However, regarding “(4) Delayed learning due to the complexities of being multilingual”, “(6) The possibility of losing one’s culture and language attrition”, “(7) Declines in academic abilities and self-esteem due to environmental changes, such as the arrival in Japan and re-migration”, “(8) Becoming uncertain of one’s identity due to the impact of environmental changes such as the arrival in Japan and re-migration”, and “(11) Communication difficulties with guardians”, when too much focus is put on learning Japanese, it may cause language attrition, have an impact on one’s identity, cause children to lose their tools to communicate with their families, and may have a significant impact on a child’s growth and personality development. It is important for supporters to adopt an approach to language guidance and assistance that respects the native languages of individuals.

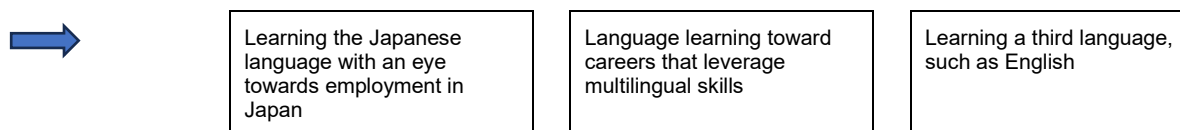
As more children with foreign roots are being born and raised in Japan, some children have been placed in environments where they have no choice but to lose their native language. As the concept of “language rights” have been advocated in recent years, it is essential to have a perspective that respects all languages.



- Acquiring multiple languages with an eye towards career development

Many interviewees developed their careers by using their language skills as strengths. Leveraging Japanese, one’s native languages, or English, which can have a similar vocabulary and pronunciation to some native languages, as strengths have resulted in enhancement of self-esteem and nurtured a positive outlook for future career development regarding situations of “(13) Japanese abilities / academic abilities that are insufficient for entrance exams” and “(7) Declines in academic abilities and self-esteem due to environmental changes, such as the arrival in Japan and re-migration”.

Having multiple language skills does not only affect one’s career, it also has an impact on where one lives, whether the person is able to have a broad perspective toward society and culture, and flexibly understand different cultures. Having such perspectives and the potential to play an active role globally can be used as advantages toward the issues of “(18) Difficulties in widening options”, “(19) Lack of understanding by Japanese society towards the potential of talent with overseas connections”, and “(20) Negative judgement from society and corporations toward one’s nationalities and educational history, etc.” within career development.



(4) Why Career Development Is an Important Factor

- Support for discovering strengths and interests, and developing them

The interviewees had experienced difficulties such as “(4) Delayed learning due to the complexities of being

multilingual,” “(7) Declines in academic abilities and self-esteem due to environmental changes, such as the arrival in Japan and re-migration,” and “(8) Becoming uncertain of one’s identity due to the impact of environmental changes such as the arrival in Japan and re-migration.” As a result, they began thinking about their future careers, the country they would live in, and their strengths from an early age, discovering their strengths and interests in fields such as multiple languages, sports, and design. Although some households had financial difficulties along with language and learning challenges, many took action to use their strengths to change their circumstances, and aimed to link their skills to future educational paths and career development even if they had issues such as “(13) Japanese abilities / academic abilities that are insufficient for entrance exams” and “(18) Difficulties in widening options”.

Supporters around these children can also help through creating opportunities for these children to recognize their strengths and interests, and enabling them to explore diverse fields. Furthermore, when a child wishes to expand on their strengths and interests, supporters can provide advice for methods and obtaining information to achieve this. It is important for homeroom teachers, academic guidance staff, learning support staff, native language interpreters, NPOs, and guardians to bring out the potential of children and provide advice and support while showing confidence in their capabilities.



Provision of opportunities to uncover strengths and interests

Provision of materials and opportunities that allow strengths and interests to grow

- Career education geared toward children and their guardians

In contemporary Japanese society, pursuing further education through high school is an important step for broadening future options. However, some interviewees faced difficulties with high school entrance exams (“(15) Difficulties accessing information for further education” and “(16) The family’s financial situation”), due to both children and guardians not fully understanding the process, and not having experience or an educational policy for high school exams (“(9) Lack of guardians’ time, energy, and mental capacity to sufficiently think about education” and “(14) Lack of guardians’ experience in Japanese education and career development”. As seen in areas with a high density of individuals with foreign connections, it is important to provide information on Japan’s educational system (including high school entrance exams) and preparation for further education at high schools and universities. This should start from elementary school and should not be one-sided communications, but rather through opportunities established for consultation and dialogue. Furthermore, regarding “(18) Difficulties in widening options” with career development, it is effective to provide opportunities to interact with role models, to enable these children to establish a positive image toward their future.



Provision of information on the Japanese education system from elementary school

Provision of information on necessary preparation for further education at high schools and universities

Provision of opportunities to communicate with role models

- Learning support and information provision for further education at high schools

Interviewees faced diverse obstacles when advancing to high school, such as “(13) Japanese abilities / academic abilities that are insufficient for entrance exams”, “(14) Lack of guardians’ experience in Japanese education and career development”, “(15) Difficulties accessing information for further education”, and “(16) The family’s financial situation”. Typically, advancing to further education at high school requires academic tests and interviews. Students will need junior high school-level knowledge to address this. Japanese high schools have full-time, part-time, and correspondence schooling systems, along with specialized high schools, and schools with established or incorporated specialized programs (such as commerce, engineering, and agriculture). For children with foreign connections, finding a high school that matches their career goals or interests may be challenging. The standards and entrance exam procedures regarding admission quotas for foreigners also differ across municipalities, making it a complex situation. In this way, getting to know the strategies to overcome each obstacle requires time and effort when done alone. Therefore, supplementary lessons and learning support, along with assistance for application submission and document preparation, and the provision of information for further education from schools and organizations such as NPOs is essential.



Provision of information for

Support for entrance exam

Learning

further
education

applications

support

- Learning support and information provision for career path selection after graduating from high school (such as vocational schools and universities)

From an early stage, it is important to show children all the diverse paths available after graduating from high school, such as further education at vocational schools, universities, and employment. Interviewees faced various obstacles when moving on to university, such as “(13) Japanese abilities / academic abilities that are insufficient for entrance exams”, “(14) Lack of guardians’ experience in Japanese education and career development”, “(15) Difficulties accessing information for further education”, “(16) The family’s financial situation”, and “(17) The complexity of Japan’s entrance exam system”. Although the intent is not to advocate for all children to advance to vocational schools or universities, it is necessary to establish a situation in which children are able to move on to further education if desired, or when necessary to broaden future career choices. For this reason, it is necessary for schools and organizations such as NPOs to provide opportunities to learn about the opportunities, experiences, and broad perspectives that can be acquired through further education at vocational schools and universities, along with providing information on preparations necessary when advancing to further education, and providing learning support for this.



Presentation of diverse
options after advancing to
high school

Support for
entrance exam
applications

Learning
support

Provision of information
related to financial support
and support for application
procedures

- Career advancement through part-time work and job changes

Regarding employment, some students may start their desired career immediately after graduating from university. However, there were many cases in which students gained experience through part-time jobs or non-regular employment at factories where they learned about Japanese work styles, rules, customs, and business languages, after which they advanced by accumulating experience through changing jobs. However, companies still exist that reject candidates with overseas connections, due to not being able to envision how to work with such individuals, making decisions only on the fact that they are foreigners (“(18) Difficulties in widening options”). Even for companies who have had recruited such individuals before, there were cases in which hiring activities were conducted under the assumption of having these individuals work in factories or as drivers, without considering the potential of these individuals outside of the conventional roles (“(19) Lack of understanding by Japanese society towards the potential of talent with overseas connections” and “(20) Negative judgement from society and corporations toward one’s nationality and educational history, etc.”). Individuals with overseas connections are a part of our society. Their survival experiences, skills, knowledge, and broad perspective across different cultures should be utilized to enrich society. To achieve this, Japanese companies should develop a more inclusive mentality and develop environments to foster human talent.



Learning the Japanese language and
customs through part-time work

Fostering corporate understanding of career
development for foreign talent

5. Recommendations - Expectations regarding education and support for children with foreign connections -

Through this survey, it has become evident that the futures and career paths of young Latin American Nikkei are remarkably diverse. There are individuals who have found employment in manufacturing and other companies, public offices such as city halls and schools, and non-profit organizations engaged in social contribution activities, as well as those who have started their own businesses. The types of work they engage in are diverse, including roles in sales, public relations, technical fields, and the arts, and the paths they have taken to reach their current positions also vary.

The history of migration and return of Latin American Nikkei¹³ is long, with an increasing number of long-term residents, permanent residents, and naturalized citizens, as well as more people living in Japan with their families. How did young Latin American Nikkei overcome challenges and difficulties to forge their career paths, and how were schools, local communities, and supporters involved in this process? These experiences will serve as valuable precedents for Japanese society, where the number of people with foreign connections is expected to continue increasing.

In addition, many Latin American Nikkei wish to contribute in some way so that the experiences and hardships they have faced can be put to good use by today's children, and it is hoped that their efforts will be supported.

Here, this report will present our recommendations regarding the education and support of children with foreign connections. The following issues are expected to lead to a deeper understanding in the field of education, with the aim of helping children with foreign connections, including those of Latin American Nikkei roots, develop their careers. These issues are listed by the following categories: (1) school life, (2) community and home, (3) language learning (Japanese, native language, etc.), (4) career development. The main actors are listed in parentheses for each recommendation.

5.1 School Life

Recommendation 1: Understand and encourage children with foreign connections in schools. (Schools)

- It is important for schools and teachers to understand each individual's diverse background and respond accordingly.
- To create an environment that fosters equal relationships and mutual understanding among children, introducing their native culture and language through education for international understanding can also be helpful.

Recommendation 2: Utilize and coordinate pull-out classes and regular classroom lessons as spaces that affirm children's existence. (Schools)

- It is important that all children who need support have access to pull-out classes.
- It is also important to create a space where children with foreign connections feel safe and secure, and where they feel that they, their native language, and culture are affirmed.
- Close cooperation is needed between pull-out classes and regular classroom lessons (cooperation between the teachers in charge of pull-out classes, homeroom teachers, and others, etc.).

Recommendation 3: Create a system that promotes consultation and information sharing through dialogue between schools, guardians, and children (Schools, Local Governments, NPOs)

- To ensure that information about school enrollment, school life, and further education is clearly communicated to guardians and children, it is advisable to repeat and emphasize the key points in the notices.
- It is important to establish a system where guardians and children can repeatedly receive information

¹³ Migration from Japan to Central and South America continued from the late 19th century until the 1970s, with a brief interruption during World War II. From the 1980s onwards, the descendants of these migrants began coming to Japan for work purposes, with their numbers increasing dramatically after the revision of the Immigration Control Act in 1990. The movement of Latin American Nikkei is called "Kanyu" (reflux), referring to the so-called U-turn phenomenon, where people who emigrated from Japan before and after the war, along with their descendants, return to their "homeland." https://www.jica.go.jp/jica_ri/research/strategies/strategies_20221227_01.html

about the Japanese curriculum, costs, and requirements for further education from an early age, and have access to consultation.

- Rather than one-way information sharing, a system in which schools collaborate with interpreters and native language support staff to build a trusting relationship through dialogue with guardians and children, facilitating the exchange of necessary consultations and information sharing, and promoting consultations and information sharing between schools and guardians and children, is effective.

Recommendation 4: Share information at times of transition to ensure uninterrupted education for each child. (Schools, Local Governments, NPOs)

- To ensure continuous and seamless support tailored to each child's individual circumstances, it is important to facilitate smooth handovers and information sharing between the Board of Education and elementary/junior high schools, as well as between elementary/junior high schools and high schools.
- Sharing teaching experiences and materials within and between schools, as well as establishing networks among teachers in charge of pull-out classes, is also necessary for providing uninterrupted educational support, especially given the increasing number of children with foreign connections.

Recommendation 5: Support the growth of children from a medium- to long-term perspective. (Schools)

- It is desirable for school staff to consider children's growth over a long span, from elementary school through high school and beyond, to understand that there are diverse growth processes and career paths, and to provide support accordingly.

5.2 The Community and Family

Recommendation 6: Collaborate between support groups, such as NPOs, and schools. (NPOs, Schools, Guardians)

- As NPOs and other support groups often have access to information that schools may have difficulty obtaining, such as details about guardians and families, it is effective for them to collaborate with schools and exchange information.
- It is important to create opportunities for schools to share the activities of NPOs (such as career guidance, Japanese language and native language classes, and study support classes) and to work together to complement each other's support.
- Children with foreign connections not only receive language and learning support at NPOs and similar classes, but also feel a sense of security when they perceive that they, along with their native language and culture, are affirmed there.
- To sustain and improve the activities of NPOs and other organizations, support from government authorities in terms of funding and securing human resources is necessary.

Recommendation 7: Provide opportunities for the next generation of individuals with foreign connections in ethnic communities to grow and play an active role. (Schools, Local Governments, NPOs, Local Communities)

- Ethnic communities allow children and families with foreign connections to pass on their native language and culture, feel a sense of familial connection, and develop their identity.
- It is effective to develop young people involved with ethnic communities as leaders who will guide and support future generations of children, and to create opportunities for them to play an active role.
- It is important for schools, local governments, NPOs, and local residents to understand the significance of ethnic communities for children and families with foreign connections, and to provide support accordingly.

Recommendation 8: Support guardians and children within the community and at school. (Schools, Local Governments, NPOs)

- It is desirable for guardians to also have a connection with the local community as members and receive support.
- It is important for education and welfare administrations to work together, and for local governments,

NPOs, schools (teachers, interpreters, counselors, etc.) to collaborate in connecting guardians, children, and schools, providing support to families to prevent them from becoming isolated.

- It is important for the local community and schools to support guardians who have difficulty finding time for education and career development, and to enable them to actively engage in their children's education and career development.

5.3 Language Learning (Japanese, Native Language, etc.)

Recommendation 9: Understand the diverse growth processes of children who speak multiple languages, and respect the languages that children possess. (Schools, Local Governments, NPOs, Guardians)

- Children with foreign connections use multiple languages to think and communicate, which helps shape their personalities. School staff should understand that the developmental process and growth periods are diverse and differ for each child.
- School staff should understand that children may face difficulties in communicating with their guardians and others due to the complexity of using multiple languages.
- It is necessary for those involved both inside and outside of school to provide language instruction that respects the languages of children with foreign connections, whether their native language or any other language, and to actively create opportunities for them to engage with that language and culture.

5.4 Career Development

Recommendation 10: Support the discovery of strengths and favorite things, and the efforts of individuals to make use of them in their careers. (Schools, NPOs, Guardians, Local People, etc.)

- Through their school life, children discover their strengths and interests, such as multiple languages, sports, and design-related fields, and use them as an opportunity to change their current situation.
- It helps if those around them encourage them to recognize their likes and strengths, and provide opportunities and resources to help them develop those strengths.
- It is important that those around them trust the child's abilities and support them in bringing out their potential.

Recommendation 11: Early career education (Schools, Local Governments, NPOs)

- Early career education, both inside and outside of school, is important for students to understand the path to the career they want.
- From elementary school, it is important to create opportunities for students to think about their future and meet people from various professions so that they can find role models.
- Such opportunities will help children with foreign connections visualize their future with a sense of reality and begin to gather information.

Recommendation 12: Present students with their options for entering high school, and have schools, local governments, and NPOs collaborate with children. (Schools, Local Governments, NPOs)

- As guardians of children with foreign connections often have no experience with high school education in Japan and lack opportunities to understand the preparations and realities of the situation, it is necessary for schools and local communities to collaborate in providing and sharing information about the Japanese education system and high school entrance exams with both children and their guardians at an early stage.
- To overcome the barriers that may arise in choosing a high school or in taking entrance exams, it is also essential to have learning support provided by schools, local governments, and NPOs.

Recommendation 13: Career guidance in high schools through collaboration between schools, local governments, and NPOs. (Schools, Local Governments, NPOs)

- It is desirable to share and exchange information on career guidance initiatives and outcomes at high schools both within and outside the prefecture.
- It is also beneficial for high schools to collaborate with local governments, NPOs, etc., and share information with students and their guardians regarding learning, career counseling, and career development.
- It is necessary for the entire community to support children with foreign connections so that they can choose the career path they want after graduating from high school.

Recommendation 14: Support for choosing from a wide range of options for life after high school graduation and assisting in making those choices a reality. (Schools, Local Governments, NPOs)

- After entering high school, students should be presented with a wide range of options early on, including progressing to vocational schools, universities, or entering the workforce.
- Students need support to help them understand the benefits and purpose of progressing to vocational schools, universities, or entering employment, and to prepare for these paths.
- Universities with many foreign students can share their experiences in accepting, educating, and guiding students towards employment with other universities and high schools, which can also be helpful for high school students.

Recommendation 15: Create opportunities to introduce young people with foreign connections both within and outside of school. (Schools, Local Governments, NPOs)

- As is already being conducted through collaboration between school boards, NPOs, and schools, or through NPOs alone, opportunities should be created for young people with foreign connections to share their experiences regarding career and career path formation, and for children with foreign connections to consider the diverse career paths they may pursue in the future.
- The career experiences of people with Latin American Nikkei roots should be used to support the career development of children with foreign connections.

Recommendation 16: Raise corporate awareness of the need to accept a diverse range of human resources and create an environment for human resource development. (Companies, Local Governments, NPOs)

- Raising awareness among companies is crucial for the career development of people with foreign connections. Some companies still struggle to envision working with people from foreign connections or that only envision simple labor. Therefore, it is becoming increasingly important for companies to understand and establish systems to accept and integrate them.
- It is effective for local governments and NPOs to involve companies in raising awareness and improving the environment for human resource development. Examples of NPOs and local governments involving companies in career education support projects, as well as NPOs matching companies with individuals from foreign connections, are valuable references.